FOR FRIENDS

VOLUME ONE

COMPRISING
BOOKLETS ONE TO TWELVE

A COMPILATION OF THE SELECTED DISCOURSES OF HADHRAT MAULÁNÁ MUHAMMAD MASÍHUL-LÁH KHÁN SÁHIB رحمة الله عليه

Prepared by

Dr. Ismail Mangera

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه was born in Sarai Barlah in the district of Aligarh in the year 1329 or1330 H. Hadhrat's رحمة الله عليه lineage is linked to the noble Sharwání family of landed nobility and, being linked to Sayyid Hussain Ghaurí رحمة الله عليه, the lineage is also Sayyid. Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه attended the local government school up to standard six, but did not continue with his secular education, rather preferring to study Dín which he studied initially in his hometown and, thereafter, completing his studies in Deoband. Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه became bai'at to Hadhrat Ashraf Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه, from whom Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه received his Khiláfat. This was in the same year that Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه qualified from Deoband. Hadhrat Ashraf Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه stationed Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه in Jalálábád, where Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه established the madrasah, Miftáhul-Ulúm, and a khánqáh where sálikín stayed for their self-rectification. Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه passed away in Jalálábád on the 17th Jamádul-Ulá 1413 A.H., corresponding to the 14th November 1992.

Volume One: 1435/2014
Prepared by: Dr. Ismail Mangera

Published by:
Al-Namal Publications
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ISBN: 978-0-620-60677-6

CONTENTS FOR FRIENDS VOLUME ONE

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD TO THE PRESENT BOOK: FOR FRIENDS, VOLUME ONE

From time to time individuals have requested that the "For Friends" booklets should be compiled into one volume. The reasons were that the single booklets would get mislaid or friends would borrow a particular booklet (and not return it!). Obviously, this made sense, and I had made several attempts to compile the booklets into one volume. However, each attempt came to nothing. Alhamdulilláh! This time with the taufíq from Alláh Ta'álá, the barkat of our Sheik رحمة الله عليه and the du'ás of readers, this task is near completion.

What is the benefit of such a book? I came across a nice piece in the kitáb "Aqwál-e-Salaf": Putting forth the benefits of such books. Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Qamaruz-zamaan Sáhib رحمة الله عليه (Alláhbádí) wrote:

The benefits of the books of Súfís

Hadhrat Muslihul-Ummat, Murshidí Mauláná Wasiyulláh Sáhib quddisa-sirrahu, wrote… on the benefits on the statements of the Súfís. I am quoting here. He used to say:

"The books of the Súfís contain many sciences and experiences through which a special condition and feeling is created in the heart, the way is made easy, knowledge of the pre-requisites and obstacles of the Taríqah is obtained and a path which would normally take many years to traverse, is covered in a few minutes.

"Many points of wisdom and cognition are obtained from a study of these books. We learn of the beauty and splendour of the Sharí'ah from them, and this increases our insight.

"Yes, there are certain things which are difficult to comprehend. This is not surprising because the books of every science and every subject contain certain points which are complex and difficult, and beyond the comprehension of all and sundry. The Qur'án Sharíf itself contains muqatta'at letters (whose meanings are known to Alláh Ta'álá alone) and mutashábahát (verses whose meanings are allegorical) which we do not understand. In fact, we have been prohibited from delving into them. "I also say: There are levels of different sciences. All the sciences are not understood by everybody in the beginning. When a person's capability

and aptitude increase he understands many things [which he did not understand previously].

"The Súfís are exponents of the spiritual aspect of the Sharí'ah. So, many of their statements stem from their personal dispositions and conditions. As long as a person does not reach their level of taste and condition, he will not understand those things.

"Consequently, many 'ulemá went into the service of a pious personality by the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá and by virtue of remaining in his company, they imbibed his disposition and condition, attested to them and became proponents themselves. They themselves drank and gave others to drink. They quenched their own thirst and quenched the thirst of others." (Tadhkirah Muslihul Ummat)

In the same kitáb, "Aqwál-e-Salaf", appears a pertinent note written by Hadhrat Mauláná Sayyid Abúl-Hasan 'Alí Nadwí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. He wrote:

"I wrote the following on the importance and benefit of the malfúzát of the pious elders: It is a very old practice ... to pen the statements and assemblies of the pious elders. This is a very blessed and wise step in writing. The verve and spontaneity which is found in those statements and assemblies are naturally not found in academic works and general writings. Then the guidelines which people of different temperaments get from the different conditions and issues can never be expected from formally written books. Simplicity, informality, affection consideration, insight on affairs, identification of temperaments of people, in-depth knowledge of general [spiritual] ailments and weaknesses and their correct treatment have always been the hallmarks of the pious elders and Súfís. The best example of this can be found in their malfúzát and majális." (Sohbat-e-Bá Ahl-e-Dil, pp. 55-56)

With the above views of two very notable scholars, one needs no apologies for printing this book!

Acknowledgements

As has been stated previously, the "For Friends" series is not a one-man effort. From the very beginning, use has been made of the valuable assistance of many individuals. Over the past 28 years, from the time that

“Good Character” was first published, numerous people have assisted. In actual fact, to give due where it is due, one is grateful for the assistance of many individuals long before “Good Character” was written. It is not possible to name all these people, some of whom have passed away. Alláh Ta’álá knows well who they are. May Alláh Ta’álá grant them the best of rewards in both the worlds.

A note on the translation from the Urdú to English

Most of the booklets have been translated from tape recordings. These recordings have been obtained from different individuals. May Alláh Ta’álá reward them. Some of the majális have been translated purely from the Urdú kitábs without the use of tape recordings. Others have been translated using both tape recordings and the written versions.

It must also be pointed out that various individuals have assisted with the translations as well. With the compiler’s limited knowledge of Urdú and of the Dín as such, a number of ’ulemá have selflessly corrected the many mistakes made by the compiler. May Alláh Ta'álá reward them as well. Non-’ulemá have also assisted and gave valuable advice on the usage of English and other literary points.

Obviously, in any translated work it is not possible to do a word-for-word translation. To make for easier reading a certain amount of paraphrasing does take place. There is a possibility that meanings do change when this happens. The compiler has tried to minimise this as far as possible. Also, many relevant words in the original works have been retained to maintain the original meanings.

Another point to bear in mind is that the actual spirit of the original discourses does get diluted when translated into English. Those who are able to read the original Urdú works or listen to the tapes will gain much more by accessing the original works.

A note on the transliteration of non-English words

How does one spell words not found in the English language? For example: Is the word الله spelt as “Allah” or “Allaah” or “Al-lah” or “Al-laah” or “Allāh” or “Al-lāh”? English, being an imprecise language, in its pronunciation

and in its spelling, there are no exact equivalents of Arabic and Urdú letters and words. (What makes it more complicated is that the spelling and pronunciation in American English is not the same as in the Queen's English!)

On the one hand, those who wish to be academically exact symbolise Arabic letters with certain symbols over or under the nearest similar sounding English letter. The example is the "ā" is used to denote the long vowel "aa". At the other extreme are those who do not follow any specific system and one has to guess what the equivalent Arabic letter is. The system that has been adopted here is an in-between system. The reason for doing this: I have found the academic system too much of a handicap in trying to read the material in a flowing manner if one is not used to such a style. On the other hand, having no system at all is doing an injustice to the material being translated.

The system opted for is to symbolise the vowels with a little stroke on the equivalent letter: The long "aa" I have written as "á"; the long "ee/ ie" has been written as "í"; and the long "oo/ oe" as "ú". Certain of the letters have an "h" placed with the equivalent English letter in order to approximate the Arabic. The reader will discover these as he reads along.

For the benefit of those who would want to be absolutely certain of the non-English words used, a glossary has been compiled giving the English spelling used, followed by the original Arabic or Urdú spelling, followed by a brief meaning of the word.

The glossary will also be very useful to give the meanings of the non-English words appearing in these discourses. At times, the reader may have to refer to the glossary; at times, the English meanings of certain words will appear in the text; and at other times the words have not been listed in the glossary at all.

Dr.I.M.

BOOKLET NUMBER ONE

Originally published November 1989 – Rabi-ul Ákhir 1410

Revised October 2004 – Ramadhán 1425

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD TO THE ORIGINAL BOOKLET

A series of discourses of Masíhul-Ummat, Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه have been recorded on tape. His unique approach to our Dín in this day and age make these discourses invaluable to that Muslim who wishes to live a life seeking the Pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá. A number of people have felt that there is a great need for these discourses to be available to the English reader. This humble servant has made an attempt at translating one such discourse from the Urdú. In-shá-Alláh, attempts will be made to translate other discourses as well. The phrase that comes to mind is: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!

The dictionary meanings of "dost" are "friend/ lover". Which is applicable? Thinking about it, both are applicable.

In a lifetime of service to the ummat, Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه – as many came to know him – has made untold friends in the Indo-Pak subcontinent as well as in other parts of the world. The word "friend" would apply here. In the special terminology of the súfí: "dost" is that person who is treading the Path of Sulúk. Being in love with Alláh Ta'álá, this person has sought out the real lovers of Alláh Ta'álá, the auliyá-Alláh, to get closer to the Loved One. In this sense, the meaning of "lover" is applicable.

Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه once pointed out an interesting fact: Every Muslim has love for Alláh Ta'álá and His Rasúl صلى الله عليه وسلم, this love coming to the fore whenever an attack is made on the Dín. In this sense, the title "Doston Ke Liye" "For Friends" for these discourses is appropriate for the whole ummat.

(Not related to the title, may I slip in a word of thanks and say "Jazákalláh" to those friends who prompted, encouraged and assisted in this publication.)

Dr.I.M.

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

INTRODUCTION

Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه needs no introduction. Hadhratjí, as most people have come to call him, is the founder of the dárul-'ulúm in Jalálábád, U.P., India. Many are the 'ulemá who have graduated from his dárul-'ulúm, arriving here from different parts of India, as well as from different parts of the world. However, it is as a sheikh of Taríqat in the field of Tasawwuf that Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه has benefited the ummat to an unfathomable extent.

In Jalálábád, surrounding the courtyard of the Madrasah Masjid, are some sixteen rooms. Originally built for casual visitors, over the years this area has come to be known as the khánqáh – a residence for those involved in their self-rectification.

An important part of the programme of self-rectification is attendance at the majlis. It is thus essential to understand what a majlis is. The word "majlis" is translated as "assembly/ committee". In our context, it refers to the gathering which a sheikh arranges and addresses: A "majlis" refers to the gathering and also to the discourse delivered.

A sheikh will have three types of majális (pl. of majlis):

— majlis-e-ám, which is for the general body of Muslims;

— majlis-e-khás, which is for the benefit of a selected group; and

— majlis-e-akhás, which is attended by a few selected, specially privileged elite. Those in the khánqáh are expected to attend the majlis-e-ám and the majlis-e-khás.

The discourse that follows is a translation of a majlis-e-khás.

The subject of a majlis

At a wáz, a specific subject is taken and discussed in detail. A majlis differs in that no specific subject is chosen. The sheikh may speak "off the cuff" and the topics may well cover a wide spectrum. The main aim is isláh – the spiritual improvement and rectification of the character of those who are attending. The discourses will vary from day to day, in subject matter as well as level of discussion. The titles of the majlis have been chosen by me

and reflect the general theme only and not the actual topics discussed.

It is not unusual to hear topics discussed so simply that even non-Muslims may understand them. On the other hand, with the presence of doctors, lawyers, engineers, university professors, students and 'ulemá, the level of talk can be so elevated that not all those attending will understand what is being said. The rule that applies is: digest and assimilate what you do understand and leave the rest till later. Topics discussed are not purely "theological". Islám covers every aspect of life; and every aspect of living has to be according to the Sharí'ah. Therefore, guidance from the sheikh is on any and every aspect of life as it affects the Muslim.

Method

Although the sheikh may speak off the cuff, each sentence is full of meaning and completely relevant. The sheikh will encourage, he will guide, he will correct — through qissas, through reason, quoting Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf. As a general rule, the names of those present are not taken. (There are exceptions and names are mentioned when there is a special need to do so.)

For maximum benefit, each individual present must have the attitude that the sheikh is addressing him personally. Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه aims to remove apathy and to provoke thought and contemplation. An appeal is made to the individual's reason and logic. He is encouraged to adopt those thought processes that will cause him to become self-motivated. Only when the individual allows the lid of stifling apathy to be removed will he be able to soar into those realms which are so fascinating as to have caused kings to give up their worldly kingdoms!

Who will benefit?

Two groups of people will definitely benefit:

- In the first group are those who have faith and confidence in the speaker. They know that their sheikh is a sheikh-e-kámil and will speak only what is Haqq. They realise that application of his advice will definitely cause an improvement in themselves.
- In the second group are those who attend with open minds. They have

neither preconceived ideas nor prejudices, but will listen and think over what is said and accept what is logical and right, what is Haqq.

A third group will not benefit at all. In this group are those who listen to criticise, those who are prejudiced and will not allow what is being presented to change their attitude.

Preparation

The basic preparation is to open one's mind and one's heart for the Haqq to enter. Any one majlis will have sufficient material in it to benefit anybody, irrespective of who he is. Obviously, the more familiar one is with the subjects discussed, the greater the benefit. Some basic kitábs recommended are:

– *"Good Character";*
– *"Sharí'at and Tasawwuf*"; and
– *"Hayaatul-Muslimeen".*

For maximum benefit, these kitábs have to be read at least three times. This rule applies to the majlis as well. Those who understand Urdú will benefit more by reading the latter two kitábs in the original Urdú. At this point let me add that the translation of the majlis that follows is not an exact word-for-word translation. A minimal amount of editing has taken place to ensure a reading style that is smooth. Obviously, the spoken word is more effective, more charming and more vibrant than the written word. Apologies for not being able to get these features across.

Not to break the beauty of these discourses completely, a maximum of relevant original terms have been maintained instead of using the English equivalents. Those familiar with the subject will appreciate this fact. Those not familiar are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these words to enjoy these discourses to the fullest extent. A glossary has also been included.

Finally: may Alláh Ta'álá give you and me the taufíq to make amal on these teachings.

Dr.I.M.

[This is a translation of the majlis of Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib, held on the 21st September, 1988, in Jalálábád, India.]

TARTÍB OF SULÚK

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ

Our objective: Tijárat for the ákhirat

We have been sent here, into this world, to be in business (tijárat) for the ákhirat. Whatever activity we are involved in here falls within the category of tijárat for the ákhirat. The supporting áyet of the Qur'án Sharíf is:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ ۝

And I have not created the Jinn and Mankind except that they should worship Me. (S.51.56)

It is clear that Alláh Ta'álá has brought us into this world for the sole purpose of making His 'ibádat and for no other purpose whatsoever! It follows that our lifestyles – all aspects of our daily lives – are subordinate to and related to the ákhirat. It then follows that the laws and rules relating to the ákhirat automatically apply to our lives here and when our living or lifestyle is in accordance with these rules, our whole existence is now 'ibádat.

The place of commerce, industry, agriculture, and so forth

Now, we have a stomach, which is housed in a physical body. The stomach requires food and the body requires clothing and shelter. The means for attaining these requirements are various – agriculture, industry, commerce, professional services, employment, and so forth. In order to fulfil our bodily needs, these worldly activities are necessary.

There appears to be a paradox: on the one hand we have been made dependent on these worldly activities and, on the other hand, the command given to us is that our sole activity should be 'ibádat. The explanation is that fulfilling our bodily needs for the purpose of 'ibádat makes the

means adopted also 'ibádat. This means that the activities listed above – agriculture, industry, and so forth – will consequently, be counted as 'ibádat.

The place of good morals

As an individual, what does all this mean to you? Involvement in any enterprise, whether in one's individual capacity or whether in partnership with others, means interaction with others. Associating with others becomes unavoidable. Different individuals have different temperaments. To be able to deal with different personalities, to be able to avoid friction with people of different temperaments, the most important factor is one's personality. In order to cope with various situations, a good character is essential – a personality that will know how to respond to different conditions in the correct manner. It should not happen that flaws in one's character disrupt the smooth running of one's affairs. It is obvious that greed and avarice, or pride and arrogance, will result in eventual disunity – such qualities are bound to cause friction and disharmony. Having understood the importance of good morals (i.e. a good character) in our worldly activities involving association with others, we can now proceed further:

The 'ibádat that one is involved in falls into two categories:

i. Muta'allaq-bil-záhir (connected with the external: namáz, rozah, and so forth.).

ii. Muta'allaq-bil-bátin (connected with the internal; with one's character).

We are accountable for both.

Of the two: 'ibádat-bil-bátin, first, has to be established before 'ibádat-bil-záhir. By doing this one will attain tranquillity, steadfastness and permanence in one's 'ibádat-bil-záhir and also khushú' and khudhú'.

Khushú' and khudhú'

What is khushú'?

Khushú' is, to avoid bringing thoughts of anything except Alláh Ta'álá into one's heart deliberately during one's 'ibádat. Note: the emphasis on the word deliberately (ikhtiyárí)). Those thoughts that are ghair-ikhtiyárí

(come involuntarily) are of no consequence. It is not only in namáz that khushú' is essential, but the concept of khushú' is that, at all times, the heart should be free of ghairulláh, that thoughts not connected with Alláh Ta'álá should not be brought to mind deliberately. This is the original occupation of the heart – Huzúre-Haqq: to be aware of the Presence of Alláh Ta'álá at all times.

Many still have the wrong concept that khushú' is essential only in namáz. Added to this is the misconception that only namáz is 'ibádat. However, the mu'min, that person imbued with ímán, bears the responsibility for performing all 'ibádat. As explained already, our sole purpose in this world is the 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá. Namáz is the záhirí 'ibádat of the body, but a more important 'ibádat is the 'ibádat of the heart. This bátiní 'ibádat of the heart is to have the Presence of Alláh Ta'álá in the heart at all times. This is a basic, primary 'ibádat. Linked with this 'ibádat of the heart are other forms of 'ibádat. It follows that all activity carried out with this primary 'ibádat firmly established in the heart, will all be counted as 'ibádat. Now there will be reality in the purpose of one's existence: namely, that we have been brought into existence for the sole purpose of the 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá.

All the necessary branches and off-shoots of our lives will then be connected to 'ibádat, whether it is agriculture or commerce, the practice of medicine or law, teaching or lecturing, writing or publishing. This being the case, the primary prerequisite before undertaking these activities, is attaining the necessary 'ilm. Whether one works alone or with others in a group, one has to know the Shar'í laws and rules related to that particular activity. The very fact that we are Muslim makes it compulsory for us to gain knowledge. This is a Muslims primary duty. The knowledge that he has to seek is that of the Shar'í laws and rules, which is called 'ilm. The attainment of 'ilm is also 'ibádat. Any person who becomes a Muslim and mu'min has to undertake this essential and compulsory 'ibádat in the first instance. Without 'ilm – without this pre-required 'ibádat – no other 'ibádat performed will be completely correct and any 'ibádat not performed correctly has no chance of being accepted!

Place of 'ilm

How important is this acquisition of 'ilm? This can be gauged from the following: On occasions of jihád not all the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم were permitted to proceed into battle at once. (The exception being those situations where there were general hostilities – nafíre-ám):

The Qur'ánic áyet states:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لِيَنْفِرُوْا كَآفَّةً ۚ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوْٓا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُوْنَ ۝

All the Believers should not go out together (for jihád). Why should one (small) group from every (large) group not go out, (And the rest remain behind,) so that (These) may acquire the understanding of Dín, so that they may warn those who had gone out on their return in order that they may adopt caution.) (S.9.122)

This áyet instructs that one jamá'at from among you (the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم) should go forth in jihád and one jamá'at should remain behind with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم for the purpose of attaining 'ilm. When the first jamá'at returns, then they should be taught. In emphasising the importance of 'ilm, the áyet also lays down an important principle:

Actions are of two categories: Firstly, the removal of harm and, secondly, the gaining of benefit. The principle laid down is that the process of removal of harm takes priority over the gain of benefit. To avoid injury, to remove those things which are harmful, to save oneself from injurious items, come first. Then only should one turn to what is beneficial. In other words, firstly remove the bad things from oneself, those things which are filthy and offensive. Then adorn oneself with good.

Here is an illustration: If you wish to fill an empty hauz (pond) with clean water, you will first make sure that it contains no filth, nothing malodorous. You will make sure that it has neither holes nor defects in it, that is, any fault that will cause the water to leak away. You will take care to clean the hauz properly, repair the cracks and then only will you fill it with clean water. This is a common sense method, an instinctive, natural way of going about the work. When it comes to our Díní affairs, the same method applies.

When preparing for ’ibádat, one will have to look closely at oneself: are there no defects within, any such offensive matters that will prevent good from entering? If not, are there no such factors that will cause the good that has entered from seeping away?

Obstructing factors are of two types:

– *Firstly,* those that impede good from entering; and

– *Secondly,* those that dissipate the good already present. What are these obstructive factors?

Akhláqe-razílah

In one’s bátin these are the akhláqe-razílah, also called akhláqe-zamímah – the debasing qualities in a character. These debasing qualities are ingrained. The aim is to control and discipline them in such a way as to avoid their wrong usage.

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ۝

And inspired it (with realisation of) what is evil for it and what is right for it. (S.91.8.)

The akhláqe-razílah are obstructing factors – factors that prevent good from coming into a person. These factors have to be removed first, then only can there be any consistency in the good one is aiming at. What is “good”? It is ’ibádat. The aim is to establish záhirí-a’mál. The method is that which has been outlined already.

At this point an important axiom has to be borne in mind. This is: That person whose záhir only is good and his bátin is bad, is better than that person whose bátin is good and his záhir is bad.

This is from the Sharí’ah point of view. This will be explained. In other words, that person who carries out the external commands of the Sharí’ah only and his internal character is defective, is better than that person whose character appears to be excellent, but he does not carry out the external orders of the Sharí’ah. The reason why the first person is considered to be better is that, at least, he has respect for the Orders of Alláh Ta’álá. This awe and respect that motivates him makes all the difference! Secondly, looking

deeper, that person whose character appears to be excellent, but does not carry out the záhirí orders of the Sharí'ah, is, in actual fact, rotten in his bátin as well. This point requires further elucidation:

A bad character is recognised as such even by the káfir. Ask any káfir about takabbur (arrogance), about hirs (greed) and tamá' (avarice), about ghussah (anger), about hiqd and kínah (hatred and malice) and he also will tell you that these are bad qualities to have in one's character. The differentiation from a káfir will not show except in one's záhirí activities.

Difference between the character of a káfir and that of a mu'min

The question arises: What is the difference between the good character of a káfir and a mu'min, if both appear to have a good character? The difference is that the káfir's good character has been attained through simple intellectual reasoning. What his reason has told him is bad, he has eliminated. The mu'min, on the other hand, has gone through a process of tazkíyah of his nafs and has ended up with a good character. The motivation in his case has been nisbat-m'Alláh – a special bond with Alláh Ta'álá. The mu'min has khauf (fear) of Alláh Ta'álá, a quality conspicuously absent in the káfir. The káfir with a "good" character will not get into a rage because his intellect and his reason tell him it is bad. The mu'min differs in that his motivation is the firm belief that Alláh Ta'álá is hádhir-nádhir (omnipresent and omniscient.) To this mu'min this concept is not just theoretical, but a tangible bond affecting his behaviour. Another point: a person's reasoning can be faulty. Any conclusions arrived at purely from reason – as is the method adopted by the káfir – cannot be taken as valid. Only if there is a Sharí'ah basis for that conclusion will it be valid.

This applies to character as well. A character that is termed "good" based purely on reason is not necessarily good. Only that character can be labelled "good" where the mu'min has cleansed himself of the akhláqe-razílah, based on nisbat-m'Alláh, which means that his behaviour will be according to the Sharí'ah.

This answers the question that arose after stating the important rule that the person whose záhir is good, but not his bátin, is better than the person whose bátin appears to be good, but not his záhir. (Obviously, a person

whose záhir and bátin are both good is better than both.) When it is said that the záhir is good, it means that his záhir is according to the Sharí'ah as far as 'ibádat is concerned, as far as mu'ásharat is concerned, as far as mu'ámulát is concerned, even though he may have takabbur. On the other hand, the statement that a person has no takabbur, but his záhir is bad, is contradictory. In truth, if a person had no takabbur, then this would automatically manifest in his záhir being good also!

Examples of being connected with Alláh Ta'álá

Take an example:

Somebody comes from behind and, with a closed fist, gives this person a thump on his back. This person ignores the thump, carries on with what he is doing and does not even glance back to see who hit him. He has no takabbur, haqíqatan (in realty).

Take somebody else. He is also Similarly, thumped on his back. He responds by turning round and, with a stern expression on his face, he angrily rebukes the person who hit him. This reaction betrays him. His humble attitude in front of others was mere social politeness.

This reaction of his shows that the absence of takabbur was only apparent and not real – súratan, not haqíqatan. Why did he not maintain his composure? At the time that he was thumped, his true colours showed. Why did he flare up? Why did the expression on his face show displeasure? Why did anger show and unbecoming expressions issue from his lips? Why did he not recognise the opposite party and the occasion? Did he not see that it was his principal, his superior? Did he not recognise that his position demanded that he speak politely? His angry reaction betrays the fact that all the akhláqe-razílah have not been completely removed.

Another example:

Somebody has personal problems. Now, for one to go around trying to get details of his problems from others and then spread these items of gossip, shows that one is still lacking. One has not yet developed that ta'alluq-m'Alláh in one's heart that is the desired state – even though in one's záhir one may have a beard, wear a kurtah and izár. He may even be a háfiz or an 'álim!

These are simple illustrations to show up takabbur and ghíbat. What is noteworthy about ghíbat is that the backbiter is continually committing sins all the time that he is involved in ghíbat. Compare his situation with that person committing an act of ziná: his sin lasts for the duration of the act only. Also, the evil act of ziná is condemned by all. Quite rightly so, but what about ghíbat because ghíbat is worse that ziná?

The Qur'án Sharíf is quite emphatic:

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا

Do not spy on one another and do not back bite. (S.49.12)

Knowing full well the gravity of the sin of ghíbat, yet you are still involved in it?

So, firstly, those internal, obstructive factors have to be cleared up. This is to be done in the correct and proper manner – not in terms of social politeness, but in the proper Sharí'ah sense. The next step is to assimilate the akhláqe-hamídah. With the akhláqe-razílah removed, the personality will now shine forth and emit grace and elegance, beauty and adornment. If this method is NOT followed, the result is an odd mixture of the akhláqe-razílah and akhláqe-hamídah. Saddled with contradictory qualities, how can there be grace and elegance? There can be no adornment. The whole situation is faulty.

Let me ask a question: When is 'itar applied? The obvious answer is that 'itar is applied when one's clothes have been washed and cleaned, when the dust and dirt have been removed and the sweaty smell has been cleared. When one's clothes come back neatly ironed and pressed, then only is 'itar applied. Now do you understand?

Similarly, the bátin has to be cleansed. How? By an abundance of istighfár which has many facets (to be detailed later). With the bátin cleansed, now is the occasion for Durúd Sharíf – now will the Durúd Sharíf show its full effect.

Istighfár (repentance) and huqúqulláh

Istighfár is analogous to cleansing and Durúd Sharíf is analogous to the

application of ’itar. Is there any sense in reciting Durúd Sharíf, but not istighfár? Istighfár has several aspects. Istighfár, in the context of self-rectification (isláh), has a methodology. We have already mentioned the inspection of one’s bátin. One also has to inspect one’s záhir. From the age of puberty one became mukallaf – the responsibility of following the Sharí’ah was laid on one’s shoulder. From the age of 14 or 15 certain a’mál became incumbent on one. Take stock. See if there are any deficiencies in these a’mál.

Performance of qadhá namáz

The first stage to tackle, as far as one’s záhirí a’mál are concerned, is namáz. The performance of namáz five times daily became compulsory on reaching puberty. This is why children should be encouraged to perform namáz from the age of seven. We are even enjoined to inflict physical punishment in this respect at the age of 10. So that, by the time a child reaches the age of puberty, the performance of namáz is ingrained and natural, part of the child’s tabiyet and he will not neglect his namáz.

Tartíb – methodology – is our main theme. Let us reiterate this tartíb:

When realisation strikes a person, when the fear and dread of Qiyámah has entered the heart; when he has become aware of a ta’alluq-m’Alláh, at this crucial time he should inspect himself and take stock of his situation:

“Have I not neglected some huqúq?” is the question he should be asking. Neglected huqúq will have to be compensated for. The act of taubah will wipe out sins, but not neglected huqúq. These have to be compensated for.

For example: A person may have committed ziná or he may have succumbed to the shameful act of drinking liquor. Both of these acts do not involve huqúq. A sincere, proper taubah will cause these sins to be forgiven and the person can forget about his misdeeds. Not so with namáz. This involves huqúqulláh. Missed namáz is not overlooked, even after taubah. Missed namáz have to be performed. The person has to do a simple calculation. For example: He has to say to himself: “I attained puberty at the age of 15. I was negligent till the age of 30, when I became punctual. Thus, I have missed out 15 years’ namáz.” He now has to compensate for these years

of neglect.

This is the correct method. Many people have made taubah and, thereafter, become regular with their namáz, but they give no thought to compensating for what they have missed. Dirt still remains. Clean this dirt up. How? By performing qadhá namáz of those missed.

An easy method is to perform one qadhá namáz each time one performs a regular namáz. Repeat only the fardh of the missed namáz. Leave out the sunnat and nafl namáz, but include the witr with the Íshá qadhá.

It is important to make a firm intention and resolution to repay and to be steadfast thereon. Death is not in our hands. Should death intervene, there is great hope that Alláh Ta'álá, the generous, the bountiful, will overlook those namáz still not repaid. He is fully aware of our niyet. Yes, if one has free time, one may perform as many qadhá namáz as one wishes and at any time of the day or night, except at the time of the three prohibited periods. These are the time of the rising of the sun, the time that the sun is at its zenith and the time of the setting of the sun. The sooner you repay the better.

Keeping qadhá rozah

Rozah also becomes compulsory at the age of puberty. Unlike namáz, rozah is not a daily function, but is compulsory only during the month of Ramadhán annually. There is no emphasis of inculcating the habit of fasting at an early age, as is the case with namáz.

Tackle rozah in the same way as namáz. Calculate the number that had been missed since puberty, whether through neglect, illness or being on a journey, and so forth. Start compensating for these by fasting regularly, taking into account your health and strength, the climate and environmental factors.

Payment of zakát

Zakát comes next. Calculate the amount of zakát that you were liable for since puberty. Total these amounts and start distributing according to your means. Yes, if you are completely destitute, you have no alternative, but to humble yourself completely in front of Alláh Ta'álá and tearfully plead for

His mercy and forgiveness. Also, promise to distribute the missed zakát as soon as you have the means.

Performance of hajj

This brings us to hajj. If you were liable for hajj, but neglected to go, then fulfil this obligation as well. If you are very old and sickly and physically incapable of going yourself, you may send another on your behalf, sponsoring him from your wealth. If you do not have the financial means now, although you had the necessary wealth in the past, there is no need to panic! Throw yourself in front of Alláh Ta'álá, prostrate in taubah to Him. There is hope – nay, there is certainty – that He will forgive the sincere tá'ib.

These remarks are directed at that person in whom the khauf of Alláh Ta'álá has entered, at that person who has developed ta'alluq-m'Alláh in his heart. Indifference and apathy have lifted from his heart. He has placed his foot firmly on the path of Sulúk. We are speaking to him.

Istighfár and huqúqul-'ibád

Thus far we have dealt with the huqúq that Alláh Ta'álá has on one. But what about His creation? Alláh Ta'álá has also ordered us to set right their huqúq. If you have offended anyone, go to him and ask his forgiveness. Do this in the proper manner: clasping your hands in contrition, cap in hand, ask forgiveness from your heart. If not today, then tomorrow; if not tomorrow, then the day after. But do as commanded.

Despite this, if the opposite party does not forgive you, do not grieve. It is said: A person, clearly in the wrong, not asking for forgiveness is a Shaitán; the opposite party not forgiving, is an ass!

We are still dealing with the tartíb of isláh – the proper manner of rectifying oneself. After taubah one has to remove the accumulated dirt first, eliminate contaminating factors first. Thus the need to compensate for past shortcomings.

A doctor uses the same principle in his methods. For example: a patient presents with intestinal disease. Those factors causing the disease are first eliminated and then khamírah – an invigorating tonic – is prescribed. Only

if the intestines are free of the disease-causing factors will they be capable of assimilating the strengthening agents in the tonic. The doctor may prescribe a tonic simultaneously at his discretion, but that is a different situation.

To continue: We are dealing with the rights of the creation – huqúqul-'ibád. The rights that Alláh Ta'álá has – huqúqulláh – have already been dealt with. It has been emphasised that taubah does not cancel obligations. Past shortcomings have to be compensated for.

Huqúqul-'ibád are more important than huqúqulláh in terms of compensation. This importance can be gauged from the following: A mu'min is obligated to another person for the mere sum of three paisah. The mu'min has neither repaid this sum, nor has he asked to be pardoned if unable to pay. On the Day of Qiyámat 700 accepted namáz of the mu'min will be given to the creditor in lieu of the unfulfilled debt of three paisah. Just think! Are three paisah anything? On the other hand, what is the value of namáz? Alláhu-Akbar! And 700 namáz? Alláhu-Akbar! And such namáz which have been accepted? All to be given to the creditor!

To what extent is this haqq not being deliberately transgressed these days! Houses on houses are taken over; land on land is snatched away; wealth on wealth is usurped.

Just one such example is the case where the father dies. The eldest son seizes possession of the whole estate and the Sharí'ah laws on distribution of the estate are completely ignored. This type of thing is done by Muslims – those having faith and belief in the ákhirat! Yet, most sorrowfully, their actions show how weak that belief is! How deficient is that concept of Alláh Ta'álá being hádhir-nádhir. Yes, that person whose ta'alluq-m'Alláh is such that the concept of Alláh Ta'álá being hádhir-nádhir is part of his conscious and subconscious state, will act differently. The Presence of Alláh Ta'álá will be with him always. His actions will be according to the Sharí'ah, according to the manner shown by Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Neither land nor wealth will be usurped; houses will be distributed justly.

These remarks are directed at the sálik – that person who has come for his tazkíyah, for the cleansing of his bátin, for the adornment of his inner self. He is the primary person one is addressing. This is the order

and structure (tartíb and targíb) of attaining ta'alluq-m'Alláh. This is the methodology of attaining that elevation, that status, that strengthening that is the Special Bond one aims to develop with Alláh Ta'álá. Think on it. Contemplate on it. Judge yourself on it.

We are still dealing with huqúqul-'ibád

Further explanation of ghíbat

Ghíbat has been mentioned as a sin. But there is a further point here: One has made ghíbat of another person. One becomes aware that he has come to know of it. Taubah and istighfár are not sufficient. One has to ask that person's forgiveness as well. Once, the opposite party comes to know of your ghíbat concerning him, the sin goes into the category of huqúqul-'ibád. If the opposite party is not aware of your ghíbat, the sin of ghíbat remains in the category of huqúqulláh, in which case taubah and istighfár are sufficient.

The ahlulláh, the Alláh-wálá, those who have attained the correct ta'alluq-m'Alláh, should they perchance get involved in ghíbat, their taubah and istighfár are automatic. But they remain perturbed and restless and remain in a state of discomfiture until they have not asked the opposite party's pardon, even if they know that the opposite party is not aware of the ghíbat! Nay! Even though they have not made ghíbat verbally, even though they have not spoken about others' faults, but have deliberately brought the faults of others into their hearts, they have breached their ta'alluq-m'Alláh by an act of omission!

This is a very fine and subtle point and needs to be thought over very carefully: Speaking of the fault of another is obvious ghíbat. A person has not done this, but he has deliberately and volitionally – on an ikhtiyárí basis – brought the thought of another's faults into his mind. This is against the concept of khushú' – khushú' demands that only Alláh Ta'álá should be in his heart and ghairulláh should have no place in his heart or mind on an ikhtiyárí basis. Note the emphasis on the word "ikhtiyárí".

At times, thoughts may crop up involuntarily. Unintentionally, one's thoughts turn to somebody's faults, but immediately there is repugnance for such thoughts. The situation is completely different here. These

unintentional thoughts are termed “waswasah”. The response to waswasah is an inner distaste for such thoughts, contriteness, then followed by a desire to eliminate these thoughts with “Lá howla...” coming to one’s lips immediately. With this understanding of what ghíbat is, that even bringing thoughts of the faults of others into one’s heart is included, can there be any question of actually uttering words of ghíbat?

A qissah of Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه concerning ghíbat

An incident: Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه saw a handsome young man, fair in complexion and neatly dressed, begging in the masjid. The thought came to Junaid رحمة الله عليه: “A healthy young man and wearing a good set of clothes and yet he is begging?” That night Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه had a remarkable dream. (One notes that persons in the class of such people are corrected very quickly by Alláh Ta’álá!) In the dream he saw a man approaching him and saying: “Eat this meat!” He placed in front of Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه a dead body.

Junaid: “But this is a corpse! To eat it is harám!”

Person: “Oh Yes! To eat this is harám! But when you were eating the flesh of your dead Muslim brother, was that not harám?”

Junaid: “I never did such a foul thing”.

Person: “Oh No? Let me ask you: Does the Qur’án Sharíf not state that one should not make ghíbat: ‘Would any of you love to eat the flesh of your dead brother?’ ”

Junaid: “Yes. The Qur’án Sharíf has stated thus.”

Person: “Well, then you have eaten!”

Junaid: “When did I do so?”

Person: “When you saw the young man begging, you brought the thought into your heart: ‘A young handsome man, fit and healthy, yet begging!’ Did you imagine ghíbat is only when you relate a person’s fault to others and when you think of the faults of others it is not ghíbat? You deliberately brought his fault to mind.”

Let us pause here for a while and elaborate on some points:

- To deliberately bring the faults of others into one’s heart is also ghíbat. That is point number one.

- Point number two is that looking at others' faults has with it an attitude of contempt for them. Contempt for others is also harám.
- Point number three is finer and more subtle. What is the haqq of the heart? The haqq of the heart – its special privilege – is to be connected to Alláh Ta'álá permanently, with the awareness of Him being hádhir-nádhir. This being the case, why has the heart deviated for that little while to involve itself with the thought of ghairulláh? To be involved with ghairulláh is the direct opposite of ta'alluq-m'Alláh.
- Point number four: If this thought was not ikhtiyárí, why was there no repugnance at the thought? Why was there neither contriteness nor discomfort? This shows that at that moment the ta'alluq-m'Alláh was absent.

We are still speaking in general terms. These points are for our benefit. However, the condition of people is such that any attempt to make others leave this habit of ghíbat is difficult. Tell a person involved in spying and carrying tales that it is wrong, that it is against the commands in the Qur'án Sharíf. So, why involve yourself for nothing in such activity? What is his response? In his arrogance he is prepared to go further. "Wáh! I will even go up to him and tell him to his face!" Daring and rash! Persons involved in ziná will be ashamed of their actions. Any normal person will come away shame-faced, regretful of his weakness, contrite. This is taubah. Somebody involved in ghíbat, on the contrary, is neither ashamed, nor regretful. Instead of being contrite he is more daring! And – if he has some Dín in him – he will even try to justify his sin by saying: "I am doing this for his isláh," Or stating: "I am saying this to save you from the person's evil!" These are just excuses. There is justification only if there is some connection between the parties or if there is an isláhí ta'alluq. These are the different aspects of ghíbat.

We had digressed while relating the qissah about Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه. To continue with the qissah: The person's remarks had the desired effect. Junaid Baghdádí's رحمة الله عليه heart was in turmoil and in this anxious state his eyes opened from sleep. He got up, put on his clothes and went out in search of the youth to ask his forgiveness.

It has to be pointed out here that this compulsion of Junaid Baghdádí's

رحمة الله عليه to set out in search of the youth to get his pardon was a special state related to Junaid's elevated status. Where the opposite party is not aware, taubah is sufficient.

Approaching the river, Junaid saw a young man strolling along the river bank and recognised him as the same youth he had seen in the masjid. Junaid greeted him: "Assalámo-alaikum." The youth replied: "Wa-alaikum-salám." Without a pause, the youth continued: "Having seen a dream you have now come to ask for forgiveness! Without investigating, you jumped to conclusions: 'A fit young man, dressed in neat white clothes and begging!' You should, at least, have verified the facts first! How many days have I not spent without food! In spite of searching for work, I found no means. Is it not permissible, under the circumstances, for me to ask? As for these clothes that you see me wearing, they were handed to me just this morning. Seeing externals only, you jumped to conclusions!"

Who is saying all this? The youth! He is not just anybody. He was one who had some rank! It just goes to show that it is not only old people who attain high spiritual ranks. Nay. This youth had also reached an elevated stage, through 'ibádat, taqwá, zikrulláh, abstention from sin and ta'alluq-m'Alláh.

The youth further addressed Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه: "I had thought that you had attained a very elevated rank, but it appears that you still have some deficiency!"

The youth was addressing whom? Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه – one of our foremost mashá'ikh! Do not misunderstand. Do not conclude that this act of Junaid's in any way lowered his rank. No. This was a detail, a fine point which had to be brought to his notice to enable him to progress even higher. This was his isláh at the pinnacle that he already was on, to enable him to move onto a higher pinnacle. The above point should be well remembered. Students often get confused.

Ranks of the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم

For instance, when students are studying Mishkát Sharíf and come across the virtues of the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم they form wrong conclusions. A case in point is that of the status of Hadhrat Abúbakr رضى الله تعالى عنه relative

to that of Hadhrat ’Umar رضی الله تعالی عنه. Some of the virtues of Hadhrat ’Umar رضی الله تعالی عنه are such that the impression gained is that he has a higher status. The narration of a particularly excellent quality will create this impression. However, one should not look at a virtue in isolation, but one should look at the composite whole, the complete picture. It will then be seen that the virtues of Hadhrat Abúbakr رضی الله تعالی عنه are such that he enjoys a higher rank.

Let us take a specific virtue of Hadhrat ’Umar رضی الله تعالی عنه. Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم said that if there was a nabí to come after him, it would have been Hadhrat ’Umar رضی الله تعالی عنه. From this one may think: “Oho! What a high rank he has!” Remember, this is stating one particular virtue and is not a verdict over others. Such points are confusing to the student. When teaching Hadíth Sharíf in the madrasah we have to explain these points at length to the students. This digression has a relevance to our qissah.

Although the youth appears to be rebuking Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله علیه, it does not mean that he had outstripped him in rank. ’Indalláh – as far as Alláh Ta’álá is concerned – he may have, but that is something we cannot know. Lapses in a person may occur. It does not necessarily mean that the person’s rank is lowered, or that there is any difference in his perfection. A walí may have such a lapse as to be involved in an outwardly harám deed. If this is just a momentary lapse, it makes no difference to the perfection in his wiláyet. One may even read of some sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم having such lapses, but this makes no difference to their rank, or to their wiláyet. The emphasis on the words “temporary lapse” is to be noted – there should be no persistence. And if the person makes proper taubah, where can there be persistence?

We are still dealing with huqúqul-’ibád and the topic of ghíbat. We mentioned that some are not prepared to stop their ghíbat, but will go a step further and tell the person “to his face”. This is worse. It is harám. Such a person is cursed in the Qur’án Sharíf :

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةِ ۙ

Woe unto every slanderer, traducer. (S.104.1.)

Just as ghíbat is harám, reproaching or taunting – telling a person "to his face" – is also harám.

Huqúqul-'ibád and wealth: settling debts and returning illegal gains

Huqúqul-'ibád and wealth: If you are in debt, settle your debts. If you do not have the means, ask your creditor to forgive you. The costliness of unsettled debts has already been brought to your notice – payment of 700 accepted namáz for every three paisah owing! Rather fulfil your trusts and settle your debts.

If a businessman has cheated his clients, but now the fear of Alláh Ta'álá has gripped his heart, he should take pen and paper and calculate the sums involved. These amounts should then be returned to his respective clients.

Similarly, unlawfully seized land and houses should be returned to their rightful owners. If the owners are deceased, the heirs become the owners. If you have stolen anything, return the stolen item/s. In business partnerships, you may have cheated your partner/s. Calculate the amounts and return these to the respective partners. In a situation where you neither have the means to settle, nor can the creditors be traced, or they have died, make istighfár and du'á for them.

On attaining ta'alluq-m'Alláh and becoming bai'at – or even without becoming bai'at – many people make taubah and start going straight. But what about compensating for past sins? Many give no thought to it. The water in the hauz is still contaminated!

A qissah of a thief who repented

This qissah concerns a person who had become bai'at to Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Ashraf 'Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه:

One day Hadhratwálá spoke to him: "It is a long time since you have become bai'at, but, in all this time, you have not related your condition or progress."

The ta'alluq of bai'at is for the purpose of relating your hál. How can a muríd adopt an attitude of independence while his sheikh is still alive? How can he maintain silence and not relate his inner state to his sheikh?

Once, (I was also present), a khalífah of Hadhratwálá asked him concerning continued correspondence from a khalífah. This is an important point in Sulúk. Hadhratwálá replied, with a note of warning: "If one's contact with one's sheikh is severed, if one does not maintain this isláhí contact, there is a real danger of a change coming in one's nisbat, in one's ta'alluq-m'Alláh."

The message is quite clear. One should continue relating one's hál to one's sheikh even after having attained the rank of khalífah. While in Hadhratwálá's presence, we used to see isláhí letters coming from prominent 'ulemá like Mauláná Wasíhulláh رحمة الله عليه and others.

To continue: The muríd answered Hadhratwálá: "What is there to say or ask? I am a poor person. I am performing my five daily namáz. What is shown to me I do. I keep my rozah in Ramadhán. I do not have wealth, so there is no zakát to give and the question of hajj does not arise at all." Hadhratwálá said: "Is that so?"

He then proceeded to question the muríd concerning his past and his business dealings. From what he said his 'ibádat appeared to be in order, but what about his mu'ámulát? Then only did the muríd's eyes open.

"Oho! Then I am tainted from the roots of the hair on my head to the nails on my toes! In what way? Well... before becoming bai'at I used to be a thief! What must I do now? I do not have any wealth so as to return the money I had stolen." Hadhratwálá advised him: "As far as you have knowledge of the people from whom you stole, go up to them and ask their forgiveness. What else is there to do except to get them to overlook what you stole."

The muríd was a sincere person. He went. His heart had already developed ta'alluq-m'Alláh. The medán of Hashr filled his vision. He went. After a long period of absence he returned, clutching in his hand a piece of paper with a list of names. The names were of the people from whom he had stolen. Next to each name was the amount stolen. What good people they were – they pardoned him and even signed their names to that effect! There was a Hindu person's name as well – 500 rúpís of his had been stolen. 500 rúpís of those days would be equivalent to some 500,000 rúpís today! The Hindu had written: "Hasbata-lilláh, I have forgiven him." For the sake of Alláh Ta'álá, the Hindu had pardoned him the entire sum!

Having noted all this, Hadhratwálá asked: “How can one be sure that you had gone to them and that these are their signatures?”

Muríd: “You may use whatever method you please to confirm it.”

Hadhratwálá: “Very well. Go to the post office and get as many reply paid envelopes as there are names on your list. Writing for confirmation will be sufficient.”

Muríd: “Very well.” He went to the post office, bought the envelopes and presented these to Hadhratwálá.

Hadhratwálá: “No. No. I had no intention of writing to them. But, seeing you have bought the envelopes, I will buy them from you.”

Muríd: “I did not bring them to sell to you. I will use them for the mail-order business I am doing. Give them back to me.” Hadhratwálá returned the envelopes to him.

Huqúqul-’ibád! Are you beginning to understand what it means?

This is the tartíb of tazkíyah of the nafs, the methodology for the rectification of the character. How many persons exist so desirous of forgiveness as this muríd? How many are prepared to go around asking to be pardoned by those whom they have cheated?

Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí’s رحمة الله عليه treatment of Hadhrat Shiblí

Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه is one of the “Greats” among our mashá’ikh, with countless people having benefited from him. Shiblí came to him, requesting to become bai’at. Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه replied: “I have no objection to making you bai’at and entering you into the silsilah. However, work should have a methodology. You have been a ra’ís in your province and you have been a hákim there as well. Firstly, proceed to your locality and ask forgiveness from all those over whom you have ruled. Then we will consider bai’at.”

Nowadays, bai’at has become very cheap. It is an everyday request: “Make me bai’at.” This appears to be the only desire – to become bai’at. In these days of our decline as Muslims, some are made bai’at on request, others are given little tasks to perform before their request is acceded to. The reason for giving in easily to such requests is the following: in this era of our decline the process of bai’at will, at least, keep the muríd away from

customs and bid'ah, get him/her to perform the five daily namáz, get him/her involved in some wazá'if and, simultaneously, it is hoped that others will be saved from any mischief from the muríd. These are some simple objectives attained by the process of bai'at nowadays.

Testing the muríd before bai'at

But before? Oho! Previously, great trials and tests took place before initiation into a silsilah. Candidates were scrutinised properly. Among other things, was the candidate capable of eating properly? Unknown to him, he was being "interviewed." You must know what "interview" is – this is a word very much in vogue nowadays! The mashá'ikh in days gone by used to "interview" the potential muríd. The idea was to see whether he had any worth in him for the important privilege of entering a silsilah.

One sheikh used to provide the applicant with a meal, making sure that the sálin and rotí provided were in proportional amounts. After the candidate had eaten, the sheikh would inspect the remains of the meal. If both sálin and rotí had been eaten, well and good. If the sálin was eaten, but the rotí remained or, the opposite, the rotí was eaten and the sálin remained, he would tell the candidate: "There is no equilibrium in you. Our temperaments are not the same and we will not get along together." He would not make him bai'at. The candidate had failed the "interview". In worldly affairs, a lot of emphasis is placed on interviews. We hear of people having passed their written examinations, but failing on the results of an interview.

Here is another qissah:

Qissah concerning Ghulám Yahyá wanting to become bai'at

Ghulám Yahyá is well known to students. He was a great scholar, excelling in philosophy and logic. In fact his kitáb has been, and still is, taught as a standard textbook.

He presented himself at the residence of a very well-known sheikh, Mirzá Ján-jánah رحمة الله عليه. The doorman went inside to obtain permission for him to enter. Nobody was allowed to enter without permission. The appointment of a doorman was a common practice with the Naqshbandí mashá'ikh of old.

When permission had been obtained, Ghulám Yahyá entered and greeted: “Assalámo-alaikum.” Mirzá Ján-jánah رحمة الله عليه replied: “Wa-alaikum-salám”. But as he lifted his head and his eyes fell on Ghulám Yahyá, he quickly covered his face with his one arm and shooed Ghulám Yahyá away with the other hand, saying: “There is no place here for a bear!” Quite perplexed, Ghulám Yahyá left the room.

In actual fact, that one glance by Mirzá Ján-jánah was sufficient to size up Ghulám Yahyá. The reason for calling him a bear was that he had a big, thick beard which was unkempt and disorderly. Being an ’álim, a molvísáhib, the condition of his beard betrayed a streak of disorderliness in his personality. Once outside Ghulám Yahyá paused to ponder over Mirzá Ján-jánah’s رحمة الله عليه reaction. “It must be my beard,” he surmised correctly. Straightaway he went to a nearby barber to have it trimmed. When he presented himself again, beard neatly shaped and combed, the response was completely different. Mirzá Ján-jánah رحمة الله عليه welcomed him happily, asked him to be seated and complimented him: “Má-shá-Alláh! You now look like a human being!”

Did you notice how quick the “interview” was? Just a glance and the “interview” was over. Each person is judged according to the rank he wishes to attain. In our worldly affairs, a candidate applying for the governmental position of Collector will be interviewed with regard to qualities desired in such a person. Is he strong willed? Is he firm and dependable? And so forth, and so forth.

Here is another way a sheikh may “interview” a candidate: provide him with a cup of tea. If he drinks audibly, slurping his tea, he has failed. Our Díní teaching is that water (or any liquid) should not be drunk in a noisy fashion – animals drink that way! When eating, chew silently.

Mu’ásharat: social etiquettes are part of our Dín

This is also part of our Díní teachings. These etiquettes are also part of Man’s natural temperament, specifically made part of our lifestyle by our Dín. The fact is that others have adopted our teachings, whereas we have neglected these very teachings. Many are under the wrong impression that these etiquettes belong to another culture. A careful study will show that

these are from Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf.

Here follow a few other illustrations:

A person lifts up the bamboo door screen and enters without seeking permission first. Failed! Why did he not seek permission? This etiquette is also ours. The Qur'án Sharíf instructs us to seek permission before entering a person's abode.

Another person leaves the room. In doing so he lifts up the door screen and lets it fall back askew, one corner down and the other corner up. Failed! Why this disorder? Why not depart with serenity? Others now have to take the trouble to set the screen straight.

Do you understand these etiquettes? They are part of our own teachings. These are etiquettes which bring "ádmiyet" into a person.

This discussion has come in incidentally. Let us continue with the qissah of Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه and Shiblí. Shiblí had been refused bai'at. Instead, he had been instructed to ask forgiveness from his former subjects. Shiblí departed and did exactly as instructed. He went around for a whole year asking for forgiveness and then returned. Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه was impressed by his sincerity. He now instructed Shiblí to go out and beg alms from the people for another whole year. Just consider: Shiblí, a man from the nobility, a former ruler, told to go and beg! His isláh was in progress. Bai'at will take place at the proper time, but, in the meantime, his isláh was in full swing.

In this age, ask even a nonentity to go out and beg and see the reaction. The person will feel most offended. He will consider it an insult. He will leave, mumbling: "What kind of sheikh is this? Me, go and beg?" In days gone by, seekers of Truth were sincere.

Shiblí went out begging. A whole year he begged. In all this time he received... nothing! He reported back. Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه: "Ofo! People gave you nothing? What a shame! Never mind. Go out and beg again. But this time, whatever people give you, see that you distribute to the poor!"

Food was provided by the khánqáh. Those were the times when the khánqáh and the madrasah were sponsored by the Muslim rulers. The expenses of these institutions were specifically budgeted for. This was all done according to the teachings in "Hedáyah". Now, no more. These

institutions are forced to go out for collections in order to continue functioning.

Shiblí set out to beg again. This time people gave, but whatever Shiblí received he gave to the poor. In this way, another year went by. How many years had passed by? Three. Yes, three years had passed by since that day that he had come with the request to become bai'at. One year was spent asking for forgiveness; one year went by in begging and not receiving anything; and one year went by in begging and giving to the poor. Now only did he have permission to sit in the majlis. His isláh had been made. The exercises that he had been put through in the three years had made sure that there was no takabbur, no 'ujub, and so forth. The correct tartíb had been followed – that is the removal of the akhláqe-razílah, before going onto the next stage.

Nowadays, people want to be raised to the level of khalífah even before becoming bai'at! A person wrote to me about a dream he had. In the dream a particular buzurg had asked him why was he not making others bai'at. This was now bothering him! Only after three years of effort was Shiblí allowed the privilege of sitting in the majális of Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه. Only now was some shaghl shown to him.

Many people come here requesting to be shown some zikr, some tasbíh, on the very first day! Very well. In-shá-Alláh, that will be shown, but the tartíb is that isláh comes first! Remove all the debasing qualities first. Remove the akhláqe-razílah and emblazon yourself with the akhláqe-hamídah. Clean the nafs first. Remove all the dirt and filth, all the malodorous items, all the bad and evil. Get this right first, properly. Remove the deficiencies. Fill up the cracks and the holes. The heart can attain a glow and lustre only after the filth and impurities – the akhláqe-razílah – have been removed.

What had happened to Shiblí in those three years? The animalism in him was removed, the animalism that is kept in every human being. Students of logic will understand the following: When it is asked: "Min-al-insán?" (What is Man?), the answer is: "hayawánun-nátiqun" (an animal having intelligence). Hadhratwálá used to say that the scholars have given the above answer, but, in his humble opinion, a more correct answer would be: "hayawánun-motafakkirún" (an animal having fikr). "Fikr" means having

one's vision on the eventual outcome of any act at first sight.

The scholars of logic are all agreed that the subject of logic is meant for people like us and not the auliyá. The gaze of the auliyá-Alláh falls immediately on the correct outcome of a situation without them having to study the science of logic. This human being, this "hayawánun-nátiqun," whose tazkíyah has been made, has had the animalism removed. This leaves him with the second quality in the aforementioned definition, namely "intelligence".

This is how he is differentiated from animals. An important point to remember is that the process of tazkíyah removes the "animalism," but not the "animal" in man. The instinctive animal qualities have not been entirely eliminated by the process leading to isláh – these instinctive drives have been subjected to intelligence. There is no change in those basic instincts that Man shares with animals. What has changed is that these instinctive qualities will not find expression contrary to the dictates of intelligence. There will be no abuse of one's faculties.

The three faculties of Man

Man has three basic faculties – Qúwate-ghazbiyah (rage), qúwate-shahwiyah (passion) and qúwate-'aqliyah (reason). Each of these can exist at any one of three levels – deficiency, equilibrium or excess. Should qúwate-ghazbiyah be in a state of deficiency and be absent, the person will not be able to express any anger. Who is then going to wage jihád? Who will make the correct effort to protect his possessions and his life? How will law and order be correctly established in the land? Should qúwate-shahwiyah be eliminated how will offspring be born? The Ambiyá عليهم السلام had offspring, this being proof of the desirability of a certain degree of passion.

The aim is not to eliminate the basic instincts, but to terminate their abuse. This is tazkíyah of the nafs. The purpose of Sulúk is the proper and correct Shar'í tazkíyah of the nafs. Isláh, if carried out correctly, will bring about this tazkíyah. This was the process Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه put Shiblí through. Huqúqul-'ibád had to be fulfilled through the asking of forgiveness from Shiblí's subjects. Tazkíyah was done through begging, which broke all pride and arrogance in him. After the tazkíyah, or with it, comes tajliyahe-

qalb (embellishing the heart) with the akhláqe-hamídah, making sure that both huqúqulláh and huqúqul-’ibád are taken into account.

In the beginning, it was said that Man has been sent into this world for the sole purpose of ’ibádat. What has been laid out in front of you is the tartíb involved in the fulfilment of this responsibility. Both the sálik and the tabíbe-isláh have to follow this method. Sulúk is not merely reciting wazá’if. Many hanker only for wazá’if and do not look at the tartíb. These people hanker for that for which one will not be called to account and neglect that which comes first and for which one is accountable. One bears responsibility for fulfilling huqúq and not for huzúz. The mustahabát, the mustahsanát, are all parts of the huzúz.

Kaifiyát – spiritual states – are part of huzúz

Similarly, kaifiyát also form part of the huzúz. These are not parts of the huqúq. Some tend to run after kaifiyát. Kaifiyát produce enjoyment and delight. Sometimes there is crying. At times, the heart is also crying. Some or other emotional state overwhelms the person. But remember, kaifiyát are also part of makhlúq. So, how can the sálik pursue the makhlúq when his objective is the Kháliq? Alláh Ta’álá is not going to ask: “Why did you neglect your wazá’if? Why did you neglect your nafl ’ibádat?” No. But Alláh Ta’álá is definitely going to ask: “Why did you neglect the necessary Shar’í commands of the Dín? Did you perform your namáz? If you did, why did you not perform it with jamá’at? What Shar’í excuse prevented you from making your namáz with jamá’at?” And so forth.

Do you understand this difference between huqúq and huzúz?

Let us illustrate it in another manner: Food that we eat can be put into two categories. The one category is essential for the proper nutrition of the body. In this category we have items like rotí, meat, dhál, and so forth. It is the huqúq of the body to have these basic foods in order to thrive properly. If one interferes with this right of the body by not eating – staying hungry for no valid reason – one will be questioned for one’s neglect. To eat your fill and maintain your health and strength falls in the category of huqúq.

The second category of foodstuff contains items prepared in addition to the basics. These items are not essential for the nutrition of the body.

Examples of such items are chutney, achár, halwá, murabbah, and so forth. This is the category of huzúz. These items add taste, whet the appetite. If a person leaves out the rotí, dhál and meat and eats only chutney and achár, a bit of fruit and murabbah, will he be able to maintain his health and strength? No, obviously not. Yes, he may experience some temporary pleasure, but the eventual outcome will be injurious. In a similar manner, one's rúhání nutrition can be categorised into the category of basic and essential – the huqúq – and the category of huzúz – what is additional to the basic. The huqúq cannot be neglected; the huzúz may or may not be performed.

Nafl 'ibádat fall in the category of huzúz

Nafl 'ibádát, whether namáz or rozah, fall in the category of huzúz. Like chutney and achár, they add to the taste and delight! Nafl namáz may be those that are performed at the times of the five daily namáz, or they may be those at other prescribed times – Ishráq, Chásht, Awwábín, Tahajjud.

The nafl rozas are kept in the months of Shábán (15th), Shawwál (any six days), Zil-Hajj (9th), Muharram (9th & 10th or 10th & 11th). One may keep three nafl rozah every month too (13th, 14th & 15th).

Being nafl, if not performed, one will not be answerable. However, nafl and wazá'if bring joy and light to one's 'ibádat. That is one reason why they are prescribed. Another reason for recommending them is to fill in any deficiencies in our necessary 'ibádat. Just like condiments, salad, fruit and halwá will provide vitamins and minerals lacking in the basic food, Similarly, the nafl is there to fill in any shortcomings in our huqúq.

The following comes in Hadíth Sharíf: When one's namáz are weighed on the Day of Qiyámat and are found to be deficient, Alláh Ta'álá will ask the malá'ikah to see whether there are any nawáfil in one's Book of Good Deeds. The malá'ikah will look and say: "Yes, there are". Alláh Ta'álá will then order: "Compensate the deficiency in his fardh with the nawáfil!" And this will be done. The nawáfil will have been of benefit. This is an even more important reason than the first for performing one's nafl. Who is there who can say that his fardh is absolutely perfect? The importance of performing even more nawáfil is obvious. In this manner one may be able

to compensate for the weakness in one's huqúq.

To summarise thus far: What has been presented to you today is the tartíb of tazkíyah, the method of isláh. This has two parts to it:

Firstly, tazkíyah – the removal of the akhláqe-razílah from the nafs:

Secondly, following tazkíyah comes embellishment of the heart with akhláqe-hamídah. The isláh should not be merely superficial. It should be done in such a way as to be permanent.

How to judge? How to see if there is permanence in one's isláh? In the case of deep-rooted tazkíyah, at the time of any inclination towards akhláqe-razílah, the person will immediately stop himself without consciously devising any specific plan. Understand this last phrase well. The person will stop himself without consciously telling himself "Alláh Ta'álá is watching me!" This is done without consciously looking through the different remedies for that particular unseemly inclination. This is the standard! This is the criterion!

You may not have reached this level. In that case, the second level is good enough. This is to stop the nafs immediately when it inclines towards the akhláqe-razílah, by consciously putting into operation any of the procedures prescribed for that particular bad quality. This will indicate that the person has attained the objective of isláh of the nafs.

Thus, today the tartíb of Sulúk has been laid out in front of you. Supporting áyát from the Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf and qissas of the akábir, the auliyá-Alláh and their muríds have been quoted. It was emphasised that, with our akábir, isláh took place before the formality of bai'at.

The isláh of the ra'ís requesting to become bai'at

The following qissah will further go to illustrate this point:

Hadhratwálá had gone to some place. A ra'ís residing there had requested to become bai'at. Hadhratwálá had acceded to his request and had appointed a specific time for the ra'ís to present himself for the formal ceremony of bai'at.

Because the muríd-to-be was a ra'ís, he felt he had to distribute mitháí to mark this happy occasion. This is not part of our custom – when a person becomes bai'at, he is not expected to distribute mitháí. On the other hand,

if the person does distribute mitháí, there is no objection either. But still, it is not part of our practice.

Some acts of mubáh become prohibited when harmful effects set in

Let us digress to elucidate this point further: Some acts which are mubáh are prohibited when harmful effects set in. An example of this is the distribution of mitháí at the khatam of Qur'án Sharíf – at the completion of the recital of the Qur'án Sharíf in Taráwíh during Ramadhán. This distribution is mubáh. If it was not mubáh, Hadhratwálá would not have been a party to it:

In the early years he gave consent, but when harm intruded he put a stop to the practice. What started happening was that people not making namáz came just for the mitháí; others used to perform their Taráwíh elsewhere and arrive there for the mitháí; very young children started coming on that night; the floor of the masjid and courtyard became strewn with mitháí, with people trampling all over the mitháí; others again, started queuing more than once for the mitháí; and so forth. Because of the harm, this practice came to be prohibited. The principle involved is that a permissible mubáh act will become prohibited when harm and corruption sets in.

When faced with two approaches

This principle must not be confused with the following: certain acts have two opposing approaches. Both are permissible. When one approach is adopted the other one does not fall into the category of being prohibited.

Examples of these are:

a) The imám facing the jamá'at after the Fajr and 'Asr namáz: He sits with the congregation on his right. To sit in such a way that the congregation is on his left, is permissible. However, I have not seen our akábir adopting this latter position.

b) Qirá'at khalfe-imám: This is permissible by the ruling of Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه, but he has chosen the opposite viewpoint. This is a long and complicated mas'alah.

c) Rafa'-e-dein. This is not so complicated. Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه has never said that it is harám. What he has said is that leaving off rafa'-e-dein

is superior (afzal). A person who has never in his life practised rafa'-e-dein, should occasionally do so, ensuring that one has acted on the Hadíth Sharíf in support of rafa'-e-dein as well.

d) Position of hands in namáz: Imám Málik رحمة الله عليه has ruled that the hands should be at the side, not folded. Imám Sháfí's رحمة الله عليه ruling is that the hands should be folded on the chest. Imám Abú Hanífah's رحمة الله عليه ruling is that the folded hands should be placed over the lower abdomen. If you have never followed the other rulings, do so occasionally. They are not prohibited.

e) To recite "Ámín" loudly is also not prohibited. Occasionally say "Ámín" loudly as well. All these alternate rulings have Hadíth Sharíf to support them. The difference that exists between the four Imám's is in the question of "afzaliyet" – which would be superior. Each Imám has placed his own ruling as superior, but has not categorised the other rulings as "ná-já'iz". These issues are thoughts for the thoughtful.

This topic is incidental. Let us go back to Hadhratwálá and the ra'ís: The ra'ís arrived at the appointed time for the ceremony of bai'at. A basketful of mitháí, carried by his servant on his head, was also brought for distribution. The servant placed the basket on the floor and departed. Hadhratwálá said: "A certain person has requested to see me and I have to proceed there now. You come with me. In-shá-Alláh, if I have the opportunity, I will make you bai'at there." The servant had gone. Who was going to take the basket of mitháí along? The ra'ís bent down, lifted the basket and placed it carefully on his own head. Walking thus, he followed Hadhratwálá. The process of isláh had started, before the formality of bai'at. The rúhání tabíb, Hadhratwálá, had recognised the temperament. "Coming to become bai'at himself, but getting the servant to carry the mitháí! Ofo! This will not do!"

The treatment was commenced immediately. Arriving at their destination, Hadhratwálá attended to his work. When finished, he said: "Ofo! I have another appointment as well. There is just not enough time to make you bai'at now. Never mind. Come with me. In-shá-Alláh, if I have time there I will make you bai'at."

In this manner Hadhratwálá got the ra'ís to go with him three to four

different places, the ra'ís carrying the basket of mitháí on his head and onlookers marvelling at this unique parade. Hadhratwálá told us later in his majlis: "Knowingly, I led him through such places where his friends and acquaintances could see him."

Finally, they returned to their starting point. Hadhratwálá told the ra'ís: "Ofo! Unfortunately I had no time to make you bai'at at any of the other places. I have the time and opportunity now". Hadhratwálá went onto make him bai'at. Yes, the mitháí also got distributed! The ra'ís was, after all, a man of nobility and, therefore, a man of understanding. Once outside, he told others: "I had understood immediately. The treatment of takabbur in me had started. I recognised my faux pas in getting the servant to bring the mitháí. I should have brought it myself."

Faná is the first step

Here you have seen the way the rúhání illness was treated by the rúhání doctor – how the treatment had commenced before bai'at? Hadhratwálá used to say: "In my methods, the first step is faná." Mauláná 'Abdul Bárí Sáhib, who was present at the time, was puzzled. "But the kitábs have faná' as the final stage." Hadhratwálá replied: "Yes, that is true. But with me, faná is the first step. Until there is no faná, isláh will not take place."

Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه had put Shiblí through a process which led to faná. Hadhratwálá did the same thing with the ra'ís. One has to work oneself up to such a stage. So much so, that if a person comes from the back and gives you a thump with his fist, you will not even turn around to see who it is. Not even for that moment must the heart be distracted from the remembrance of Alláh Ta'álá. This awareness of Alláh Ta'álá, this khushú', is to be maintained all the time, not only in namáz.

That is why it was said, right in the beginning, that Alláh Ta'álá had sent Man into this world for the sole purpose of making His 'ibádat. Our objective is to be in His 'ibádat during all our activities. To put it in another way, Alláh Ta'álá is saying: "When you eat and drink according to My laws and instructions, it is 'ibádat; when you answer the call of nature, according to My laws and instructions, it is 'ibádat;" and so forth. This can only happen when the nafs has been cleansed of the akhláqe-razílah. Remember

that the basic instincts will remain, manifesting themselves when ordered to do so.

The qázisáhib will be told: “When you enter the court room, do so with dignity, seat yourself with pomp, lean back in your chair with majesty.” These instructions for the qází appear in the kitábs – if you so wish you may check them. The critic may say: “But these are all signs of takabbur!” Yes, very much so. The qází has been ordered to adopt this attitude. This is an occasion for such behaviour – so that awe is created in the public for this office, so that the administration of justice does not become a sport and game. The majesty of the qází and the courtroom has to be maintained. Should the head of state, the khalífah, be called to give evidence, then too, he will have to stand and give evidence, while the qází is seated. The fact that the qází has been appointed by the khalífah, who is his superior, does not alter the situation. The takabbur that the qází exhibits is súratan, not haqíqatan.

From this one can deduce another important rule: Do not judge yourself against the behaviour of the ahlulláh – they may exhibit certain characteristics which may appear haughty. Their haughtiness is súratan, yours is haqíqatan! The ahlulláh have gone through the process of tazkíyah. They are aware of the greatness of Alláh Ta’álá at all times. They bear the thought of presenting themselves in front of Him constantly. We cannot draw an analogy with them. Their anger is súratan, our rage is haqíqatan. The lives of the ahlulláh are according to the Sharí’ah, whether one looks at ’ibádat, mu’ásharat or mu’ámulát. While the creation is lost in slumber, they are awake. Their mu’ámulát are clean, their mu’ásharat is such that they do not cause any inconvenience to others. On the contrary, they bring ease and comfort to others. Their temperaments are even, changing their attitude only when others deliberately break the relationship. It certainly appears in the Hadíth Sharíf that when Alláh Ta’álá loves somebody it is announced on earth that the creation should love that person, too. The mufassirín write that this does not include that situation where somebody has caused a breach in the relationship because of some worldly affair. How is it possible to be affectionate to such people?

Summary and du'á

To end, let us recapitulate: Why has Man been sent to this world? For 'ibádat. What should one's every breath and act in this world be? 'Ibádat. These subjects have been explained at length to you. Many have categorised agriculture, commerce, and so forth, as "worldly" activities, whereas, in fact, they are all 'ibádat. Only when these activities go beyond the limits of the Sharí'ah, do they become the opposite of 'ibádat. We are to blame for taking them outside the bounds of the Sharí'ah and making them "worldly" activities instead of 'ibádat. You will find the virtues of agriculture and commerce listed in our Díní kitábs. If these activities were not 'ibádat, why would their virtues appear in Hadíth Sharíf? We have been created for 'ibádat. It is in this light that each one of us should judge and assess ourselves.

May Alláh Ta'álá give us all taufíq with ikhlás and sidq, continuously. Khudá háfiz.

CLARIFICATION

Reading the points made above on acting on some of the Hadíth Sharíf on occasionally saying "Ámín" loudly and lifting the hands after rukú in namáz, and so forth, may cause some people to conclude – erroneously – that it is permissible to jump from one mazhab to another. This is incorrect.

[Hadhrat's رحمة الله عليه *kitáb: "TAQLEED AND IJTIHAD," explains the question of taqlíd fully. Obtainable from the Y.M.M.A. P. O. Box 18594, Actonville, 1506, South Africa.]*

NOTE:

Careful reading of the introductions to the booklet will avoid such misconceptions.

It will be obvious that not all the advice given in a majlis is applicable to everybody present. It may be that certain remarks are directed at just one group of individuals, or even to just one person in the whole gathering. To see whether any comments apply to oneself, one has to refer back to one's

sheikh. The fact that such misconceptions can arise demonstrates the need for a sheikh-e-kámil to guide one.

These translations are not meant as a substitute for direct guidance from one's sheikh. Any serious seeker has to establish a direct contact with a sheikh-e-kámil in order to seek solutions to his particular problems. These booklets will assist in highlighting certain aspects of Tasawwuf and the areas that the seeker has to attend to in his own isláh.

A sheikh-e-kámil tailors a student's progress according to his level. Many instructions from a sheikh may be incomprehensible to the layman, but the purpose behind is the isláh of the sálik. This was seen in the treatments of Hadhrat Shiblí رحمة الله عليه and the ra'ís respectively, narrated in this booklet.

Dr.I.M.

BOOKLET NUMBER TWO

Originally published March 1990– Shábán 1410

Revised December 2004 – Zil-Qadh 1425

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

INTRODUCTION

In the discourse "Tartíb of Sulúk" (See "For Friends Booklet Number One"), Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه skillfully and gently led us along strange and fascinating avenues. Along our journey, we stopped at the khánqas of Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه, Hadhrat Mirzá Ján-Jánah رحمة الله عليه and Hahrat Thánwí (Hadhratwálá)رحمة الله عليه. Even more fascinating were the different concepts that we were introduced to. From among the various topics discussed, we had a chance to peep at topics like 'ilm, the madrasah and jihád.

In this discourse, with the same charm and simple logic, Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه takes us again by the hand and leads us into the very depths of 'ilm, the madrasah, the khánqáh and jihád – topics related directly and indirectly to each and every Muslim.

These few sentences do not suffice as an introduction to this majlis. The introduction to the first discourse should be re-read, as the comments made there also apply to this majlis as well as to every forthcoming majlis!

Some have expressed the feeling that the level of some of the topics are "too high"; or the points too subtle to understand. Here, one should bear in mind the golden rule: digest and assimilate what you do understand and leave the rest till later. On re-reading these "evergreen" discourses at regular intervals, one is pleasantly surprised at the amount one does understand at subsequent readings. Secondly, the logical step is to ask any one of the 'ulemá-e-Haqq to explain those points not quite clear. This latter step is also recommended to ensure that there are no inadvertent errors that may have crept into the translation. A second reason is the following: many points are so fine that they require detailed explanations before

being understood. As this aspect is beyond the scope of these translations the services of the 'ulemá-e-Haqq are essential.

During the course of this discourse, reference is made to an interesting episode that occurred during the time of the khiláfat of Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه. (A passing reference to this incident is also made in the discourse "Tartíb of Sulúk".) Before proceeding with the translation of the discourse, this particular incident is being presented to you.

[Note: This present copy of "For Friends, Booklet No. Two" is a reprint of the one published in March 1990. This copy has been revised and reformatted. Seeing that Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه passed away in 1992, reference to him has not been changed in the introduction and the epithet رحمة الله عليه has been retained. Other changes have been made where deemed necessary. In this revised copy Hadhrat Muftí 'Aqílur-Rahmán Sáhib, who compiled the Urdú version, added a qissah as a footnote in the section on "Kasre-nafs". This qissah has been reproduced at the end.]

Dr.I.M

WÁQI'AH: THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN ISLÁM

Time period: Sometime during the period that Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه was the khalífah and Amírul-Mu'minín – Leader of the Believers. (35-40 A.H.)

Personalities involved:

[i] Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه;

[ii] Qází Shureh رضى الله تعالى عنه a judge, appointed to this position by Hadhrat 'Umar رضى الله تعالى عنه during his khiláfat;

[iii] A Yahúd who lived in Madínah as a subject, under the rule of Amírul-Mu'minín, Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه.

In relating this incident, Hadhratwálá stated:

"Bear in mind that, firstly, the Yahúd as a nation had a very disgraced position throughout the world, since the time that they had been rebellious to Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام. Secondly, they were a dominated minority group in the Islámic

State. Thirdly, this Yahúd was addressing the Head of State! This is the freedom of speech and action, within the law, granted to subjects. This brashness of the Yahúd is an example of how the ta'lím of Islám was not mere theory, but was upheld in practice from the khalífah downwards.

Amírul-Mu'minín, Hadhrat 'Ali's رضى الله تعالى عنه armour had been stolen. One day, while walking through the market place, he recognised his armour in the possession of a Yahúd. He went up to the Yahúd and said: "This is my armour." The Yahúd retorted: "Bring witnesses to prove it. Alternatively, file a law suit."

Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه proceeded to Qází Shureh رضى الله تعالى عنه and laid a charge of theft against the Yahúd. The case came before the Qází. Both plaintiff and defendant presented themselves in front of the Qází on an equal footing.

Qází Shureh رضى الله تعالى عنه without being overawed by the presence of Amírul-Mu'minín, Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه, seated himself with the pomp that the situation demanded. Calmly, without any trace of discomfiture or panic, he started his questioning. He asked the Yahúd: "Does the armour belong to Hadhrat 'Alí?" The Yahúd flatly denied it.

Thereupon Qází Shureh رضى الله تعالى عنه turned to Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه and calmly requested: "Bring witnesses to support your claim."

Hadhratwálá commented: "Without doubt it was unthinkable that the claim of Amírul-Mu'minín, Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه, was not valid. Yet, proceedings had to be in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sharí'ah. Walláh! Others who have adopted civilised attitudes have learnt these from Islám and then, too, they could not equal the standards laid out by Islám!"

Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه produced two witnesses. One was his son, Imám Hasan رضى الله تعالى عنه and the other was his freed slave, whose name was Qambar. In his opinion, the evidence of these two was acceptable in the Islámic law court. However, Qází Shureh رضى الله تعالى عنه differed in his understanding of the law related to the acceptability of witnesses. In his opinion, the evidence of the son in favour of his father was not acceptable. He, thus, rejected the

evidence of Imám Hasan رضی الله تعالی عنه accepting the evidence of the freed slave only.

Qází Shureh رضی الله تعالی عنه addressed Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه: “Bring another witness in place of Imám Hasan رضی الله تعالی عنه. The evience of your slave, seeing he has been freed, is accepted.” Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه replied: “I have no other witnesses.” Because of a lack of sufficient evidence – a second acceptable witness – Qází Shureh رضی الله تعالی عنه dismissed Hadhrat ’Alí’s رضی الله تعالی عنه claim, acting according to the Sharí’ah and not according to his personal i’tiqád (faith and confidence) on the truthfulness of Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه.

The Yahúd, in the meantime, was observing the whole proceedings with full attention. On leaving the courtroom, he watched intently to see the reaction of Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه. There was not even a flicker of annoyance on Hadhrat ’Alí’s رضی الله تعالی عنه face. Not a word of displeasure passed his lips at the verdict, despite being “Asadulláh” – “The Lion of Alláh” – the title that he had earned for his ferociousness and courage in jihád against the kuffár.

Coming out of his reverie, the Yahúd addressed Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه thus: “The reality of the situation has become quite clear to me, that your religion is a true one and your attitude is its effect on you.” The Yahúd continued: “Here, take it – this armour is yours! And I herewith proclaim that I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Alláh and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger:

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّداً عَبْدُهٗ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ

Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه said: “I, in turn, present this armour to you!” The nett outcome was that the Yahúd became a Muslim. He remained with Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه until a day came when he became shahíd in a battle (i.e. he was martyred).

[This is a translation of a majlis-e-khás held by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه in Jalálábád, India, on Saturday, 2nd Rabí-ul Awwal 1409, corresponding to the 15th October 1988.]

ILM, JIHÁD, THE MADRASAH AND THE KHÁNQÁH

[Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه commenced this majlis by drawing the attention of those present to the majlis-e-ám held the day before, Friday, after the Jumu'ah namáz.]

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Those of you who were present yesterday when a wáz of Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه was read, will have heard how the 'ulemá were addressed by him. He stressed the point that the responsibility of the reformation of the general Muslim populace rested on the shoulders of the 'ulemá. The 'ulemá body formed that axis around which the improvement of the character of the Muslim populace revolved.

Who is an 'álim?

The question arises: Who is an 'álim? One can state categorically that all the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم were 'ulemá. We can thus state quite confidently that an 'álim is not necessarily that person who sits with prescribed textbooks (darsiyát-e-kutub) in front of him and has an ustád giving a lecture from a textbook. What kitábs were in front of the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم? The sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم presented themselves to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, focus of the Divine mission, to be taught by him without the aid of any kitábs.

This shows quite clearly that the aim and objective is to gain 'ilm of Dín and this is neither dependent on, nor confined to, kitábs. This is also borne out by the following Hadíth Sharíf:

اُطْلُبُوالْعِلْمَ وَلَوْبِالصِّيْنِ

Seek 'ilm even though it be in (a country as distant as) China.

Another Hadíth Sharíf states:

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيْضَةٌ عَلٰى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

To seek 'ilm is fardh on every Muslim male.

Another narration includes every Muslim female as well:

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيْضَةٌ عَلٰى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ وَ مُسْلِمَةٍ

To acquire ’ilm is fardh. The ’ilm referred to is knowledge of Dín, that knowledge that was revealed through wahí – wahí-e-jalí and wahí-e-khafí – the Qur’án Sharíf being “wahí-e-jalí” and the Hadíth Sharíf being “wahí-e-khafí. “Fiqh” is the setting out of the rules and laws contained in the Qur’án and Hadíth Sharíf into a systematic arrangement, but nevertheless, the ta’lím of Fiqh – the teachings of these rules and laws – still remain wahí.

Confirmation of the importance of attaining ’ilm, as well as its reality (haqíqat) have been stated in an amazing and wondrous manner in a specific áyet of the Qur’án Sharíf. I am not a háfiz, so may I request a háfiz to recite the relevant áyet which states that when the order for jihád is given: “Do not all go out together…”

[At this point Hadhratjí gave the lead and Haffejí Núr Muhammad Sáhib recited the complete áyet.]

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لِيَنْفِرُوْا كَآفَّةً ۚ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ
وَلِيُنْذِرُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوْٓا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُوْنَ ۝

All the Believers should not go out together (for jihád). Why should one (small) group from every (large) group not go out, (and the rest remain behind,) so that (these) may acquire the understanding of Dín, so that they may warn those who had gone out on their return, in order that they may adopt caution. (S.9.122)

I am not a háfiz, so the whole áyet has been recited by a háfiz: When the order for jihád is given, do not all go out together. Rather, one jamá’at should go out and one jamá’at should remain with you (Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم) to acquire ’ilm. Those interested, can look up the relevant tafsír. The purpose here is to show the importance of ’ilm compared to jihád.

Purpose of jihád is to remove obstacles that prevent íshá’at-e-nas

Let us now look into the subject of jihád. Waging jihád – jihád-e-amalí – against the kuffár is not to force them to bring ímán. Jihád is to remove

those obstacles that prevent íshá'at-e-nas – the dissemination of the teachings of Qur'án and Hadíth Sharíf – for the sake of Dín, and to forcefully remove those obstacles that prevent those desirous of the Dín from coming towards the Dín. Jihád is the final phase in the removal of these obstacles. Otherwise, there is no need for jihád.

The case put to the kuffár is as follow: "Why do you cause difficulties to those who have become mu'min? Why do you harass them? Why do you insult and humiliate them? Ján, mál and izzat-o-ábrú – life, wealth and honour, and respect: Why do you harass them and cause them hardships in these? Those who wish to come towards ímán, why prevent them by tyranny? You yourselves bring ímán or not – there is no compulsion. You do your work and we will do ours. However, if you do not heed our words, at this stage we say nothing – we recognise our weak position."

There is no sense in knowingly putting ourselves into difficulties in a situation where our objectives are unattainable. The teaching of Islám forbids one to deliberately place oneself in difficulties, knowing full well that one's objectives are unattainable.

That is why the 13 years in Makkah – the initial blessed Makkan Period – were spent with tremendous mujáhadah and riyádhát by the Muslims. The persecution produced such spiritual discipline and strength that all nafsániyet was eliminated and only ridhá-go'iy and ridhá-jo'iy remained – whatever was to be said was solely for the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá; and whatever was to be done was solely for the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá.

Character improvement in its entirety and perfection progressed for 13 years by waging jihád against the nafs. Tackle this first, so that when you are free from this task, your entire actions, ta'límí and ta'mílí, 'ilmí and amalí, muta'allaq-bil-záhir and muta'allaq-bil-bátin, muta'allaq-e-infrádí and muta'allaq-e-ijtimái, min-hesial mu'ámulát and min-hesial mu'ásharat, min-hesial ádat and akhláq, are solely for ridhá-e-Iláhí.

That is, one's entire range of actions, connected to learning and teaching, theory and practice, connected to one's outer, external actions and one's internal character, connected to individual activity or collective activity, whether it be in the sphere of transactions and social lifestyle, whether in the sphere of habits and character, should all be for the pleasure of Alláh

Ta'álá. Nothing else to remain or intrude between.

This will result in your actions being fully within the boundaries of the orders of Alláh Ta'álá, called the Sharí'ah, in theory and practice, in instruction and compliance, whether connected to the záhir or bátin, in a manner that is punctual and persistent.

Silently, for 13 years the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم progressed, developing firm, well-balanced characters, hand in hand with acquiring beneficial 'ilm. During this period they were not enjoined to perform any other 'ibádat. No order had come as yet to perform namáz, to keep rozah, to give zakát or to perform hajj. These became compulsory only after the Hijrat, except for namáz, which became compulsory a year before the Hijrat. Yes, there were people performing hajj, but this was done according to the ignorant customs then prevalent.

Do you understand the importance of all this?

Let us expand: It was only after the Hijrat, that a markaz was acquired in Madínah Sharíf. When obstacles were still being encountered in the matter of ta'lím of Dín and outsiders persisted in harassing and obstructing the Ahle-Dín mu'min (i.e. the Muslims), then only was the order for jihád-e-amalí given – the go ahead for jihád-e-amalí came only after the Muslims possessed a markaz and had successfully passed the phase of jihád against the nafs. Now, whatever the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم did, was within the limits set by the Sharí'ah, for the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá and not for any personal motives.

Consequently, the full help and support of Alláh Ta'álá was with them. Sukún entered their hearts from one direction and sakínah descended directly on them from Alláh Ta'álá.

We can see that jihád was not ordered to force people to bring ímán: When obstacles were placed in front of them, the initiation of hostilities was permitted. Battle was also permitted when the enemy forced a direct confrontation – nay, in this situation, it became not only já'iz, but wájib. Even the initiation of hostilities became wájib at times.

At such times jihád would be in the category of fardh-e-kifáyah and in the category of fardh-e-'ain when there is a massed attack by the enemy.

Two necessities for jihád: a markaz and taqwá
But when? Only when a markaz had been acquired. Thus, two important factors connected with jihád have been established: one is the acquisition of a markaz and the second is the acquisition of taqwá – fear of Alláh Ta'álá. To have a markaz is an 'illat; to possess taqwá is a shart. Mere possession of the shart, which is an external factor, does not make jihád fardh.

These terms, 'illat and shart, will be better understood if explained in regard to namáz:

إِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ كِتٰبًا مَّوْقُوْتًا ۝

Verily, namáz has been made obligatory upon

Muslims at fixed times.(S.4.103)

This command is the 'illat for performing namáz. Without this 'illat there is no namáz and no wudhú. Wudhú is an act outside namáz, but it is an essential prerequisite for performing namáz. Wudhú is a shart.

By adopting taqwá, sukún entered the hearts of the Muslims. By acquiring a markaz, a unique strength and sakínah came to them from Alláh Ta'álá. The sakínah that descended was from two sources: internally it entered their hearts through ilhám and externally it came from assistance and support from malá'ikah. Support from outside, provided it is according to the Sharí'ah, lends added strength.

Support from outside lends added strength
The qissah of Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام illustrates this point quite nicely. When Alláh Ta'álá ordered him to proceed to Egypt to speak to Fir'oun (to bring ímán), Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام was hesitant. "Fir'oun is a harsh person. I am not liked by him because, accidentally, I had killed one of his kinsmen. On the one hand, I am unable to speak clearly (because of my stutter); on the other hand, the uncertainty of the situation causes me some anxiety. So, it would be much better if one from my own household, somebody in whom I have full confidence, who is my brother Hárún, could be sent with me to lend support to me." Alláh Ta'álá acceded to the request and sent Hadhrat Hárún عليه السلام as a nabí with him. This is an example of external support

bringing sakínah.

External support bringing sakínah, may be through man and may also be through the agency of malá'ikah, as mentioned already.

For some, sakínah and strength may also descend directly into the heart through ilhám from Alláh Ta'álá, without any outside means, thereby gaining strength of heart. An example of this latter method is also to be found in the Qur'án Sharíf:

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نُّعَاسًا

Then, after distress, He sent down unto you a security and slumber...
(S.3.154.)

In the middle of the Battle of Uhud, sakínah descended on the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم and they were overcome by sleep. With this tranquillity all their tiredness also left them and they felt light of heart.

The importance of 'ilm over jihád

We have stated already that the Sharí'ah has stipulated the undertaking of jihád is to remove the obstacles placed in propagating Islám. Jihád is very important. Everybody knows that. Nevertheless, the importance of 'ilme-Dín is such that all have been forbidden to go out in jihád all at once, and the command has been given that a group should remain behind in the presence of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم in order to learn 'ilme-Dín.

The importance of the jihád of acquiring 'ilm in relation to physical jiháde-amalí is such that the latter (jiháde-amalí) is dependent on the former: if one does not have correct 'ilm, according to the Haqq of the Sharí'ah and the limits of the Sharí'ah, what will be the state of one's jihád? It will definitely not be according to the wishes of Alláh Ta'álá.

That is why Alláh Ta'álá says: Do not go out all together, if it is not a situation of nafíre-ám (general hostilities). No, do not do such a thing. Rather a jamá'at from among you should stay in your (Rasúlulláh's صلی الله علیه وسلم) presence to acquire 'ilm, while some should go out in jihád.

The elevated status and importance of acquiring 'ilm is being emphasised. Staying put in one place for the jihád of acquiring 'ilm is also a burden

on the nafs – one is restricted, one's freedom is curtailed, one has to be punctual. This is a jihád against the nafs.

Alláh Ta'álá then says: Those who return from jihád should now be taught by those who had remained behind in the royal court of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم what they (who had remained behind) had learnt. The word used is "fiqah" – the correct understanding: to be able to comprehend and explain. "Liyatafaqqahú-fid-Dín" – the plural used denotes that the students of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم are being addressed. One can see how a chain has formed. Starting from Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, 'ilm has been passed onto his students; his students have, in turn, become ustáds and those returning are now the students, for 'ilm to be passed onto them.

Meaning of 'ilm is knowledge of Dín

Another point is that "knowledge" is clearly meant to be that of Dín. What is meant is that the finer points of the Dín should be taught and understood. "Fiqah" includes the power of deduction; it includes recognition of place, person and situation (moqah-mahel). Please note: "Li-Ta'álámú" is not used because this would give a more limited meaning, namely "to teach". "Fiqah" implies that one should be imbued with such an understanding and fluency of the Dín academically that, if anyone were to launch an intellectual onslaught against you, you will not be overawed. In your propagation of the Haqq, you will reply in a calm and graceful manner. The setting forth of Haqq will be done politely, with good manners, without being subdued by the questioner, without being overwhelmed by him. Your response may be in reply to a query, or it may be in anticipation of any objections.

Ay-yuhat-tulláb! Hearken, O you students! This is called acquiring 'ilm! This is called studying! It is not done superficially. It is not merely skimming over the surface. Study should be in depth, with insight and foresight. The word "fiqah" encompasses all these aspects. That is why it is said:

فَقِيْهٌ وَاحِدٌ اَشَدُّ عَلَى الشَّيْطَانِ مِنْ اَلْفِ عَابِدٍ

One faqíh is more burdensome on Shaitán than a thousand 'ábeds.

To mislead a thousand 'ábeds is an easy task compared to misleading a

single faqíh. Here again the word “faqíh” appears – that person who has a deep understanding of Dín, the finer and subtler points as well as the basics. Note that the term “muhaddith” – scholar of Hadíth Sharíf – is not used.

A logical deduction is that if Shaitán himself was a faqíh, he would not have been misled by his nafs. Shaitán had ’ilm, but he was not a faqíh. His ustád was nafs and that is why he was led astray. The temptation of hubbe-jáh was too great. His nafs was not disciplined by the process of tazkíyahe-akhláq (reformation of the character) and Shaitán, despite possessing ’ilm, succumbed.

The qualities of a tálibul-’ilm

In this is a lesson for the tálibul-’ilm, the ahle-’ilm: what degree of tazkíyahe-akhláq has to be attained; and the standard of the akhláqe-hamídah to be firmly established. The akhláqe-razílah should be subdued to a point of non-existence and ghaflat should cease completely, with yád-dásht becoming firmly grounded.

We are still dealing with the word “fiqah”. The tálibul-’ilm has the responsibility of acquiring ’ilm in depth, not mere superficial knowledge, but going into details and finer points; understanding these and being able to convey to others (ifhám-wa-tafhím.) The inquiring mind of the tálibul-’ilm should delve into deeper aspects; his perception should be profound; his answers should be erudite; his tabiyet should be free, not overawed by others; his stance should be confident; his outlook should be all encompassing. This is the manner in which he should set forth the Haqq.

In the early years this emphasis on attaining knowledge caused an upsurge in all fields of study. The enemies of Islám – the enemies of ’ilme-Dín – did not miss the opportunity to attack Islám. Using philosophical and pseudo-scientific arguments, they launched a headlong assault against the Dín. That is why always, but especially so in this day and age, the tálibul-’ilm’s knowledge cannot be cursory. He has to know the masá’il of philosophy and the sciences of logic and astronomy. It is essential for the ustád to teach these to the student. This should be done in a simple manner, easy to comprehend, going into necessary details, so that the student may be

armed for the onslaught by the enemy. These are subjects that should not be removed from the syllabus, as is the trend, unfortunately!

Not only nowadays, but in those days as well, philosophical and pseudo-scientific arguments were put to the Muslims, to confuse the simple minded and lead them astray. The kuffár tried to mislead the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم with such arguments.

An example of one such argument is the following:

"What kind of logic is it that the killing by Alláh Ta'álá is harám, but killing by yourselves is halál?" This alludes to the fact that the meat of an animal dying through natural causes, in other words "killed by Alláh Ta'álá", is harám, but the meat of the animal slaughtered according to the method shown by the Sharí'ah is halál. The kuffár and mushrikín would say: "Just see what your Rasúl is saying. It does not make sense." Those Muslims who were naïve and simple minded became confused by this distorted logic.

Another attack would be made as follows referring to istinjá: they would say: "What, does your Rasúl even teach you to urinate and defecate?" In this sarcastic manner they tried to belittle the mission of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم.

But the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم were firm and undaunted. They replied with serenity: "Yes, he does! Before our becoming Muslims we never even knew how to urinate and defecate! Yes, he does teach us these!"

The simple fact is that to make istinjá in the correct manner, according to the laws of the Sharí'ah, is also counted as 'ibádat. To get one's perspective straight, let me add that istinjá performed according to the Haqq of the Sharí'ah and the laws of the Sharí'ah, far outweighs a thousand episodes of kashf and a thousand acts of karámat in attaining qurbe-Iláhí. Please understand this well! The qurbe-Iláhí and the status attained by the 'ibádat of istinjá performed in the proper and correct Shar'í manner are far, far greater than thousands of episodes of kashf and karámats. The latter, in relation to the former, are valueless.

To continue: simple minded Muslims, those newly entered into the fold of Islám, were easily confused. And in this day and age the distorted logic and philosophical and pseudo-scientific arguments directed at the Muslims

have increased manifold. The enemies of ’ilme-Dín are very active. Their aim is to mislead the uninformed.

It is amazing that on that side (among the non-Muslims) there is a tremendous upsurge and spread of knowledge, whereas we are limiting it. This is a great weakness on our part.

The question of acquiring only superficial knowledge does not arise at all! The importance of correct ’ilm – ’ilm being knowledge of Dín – cannot be emphasised enough. At all times the value of ’ilm relative to jihád must be borne in mind to appreciate its importance.

Suffah and the As-Hábas-Suffah

Suffah [A raised platform.] “Súfí” is related to this word.

This place is still in existence today since the time of the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم. In the Masjid-e-Nabawí in Madínah you will see a raised platform on which you will find people sitting and reciting the Qur’án Sharíf. This is where the tálibul-’ilm – the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم, the As-Hábas-Suffah – used to lodge in the time of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. They used to gather there. Besides the acquisition of ’ilme-Dín they had no other work.

The madrasah – some important points

Before proceeding, let us digress a little to the subject of the gathering (ijtimáyet) of students (in an institution for them to study – a madrasah): The As-Hábas-Suffah presents a precedent for providing boarding facilities at a madrasah for the students. The madrasah is established for the teaching of Dín. It should thus accommodate those who have come to learn, by providing food as well as shelter. Even students from the neighbourhood should stay at the madrasah’s boarding and not in their own homes. The discipline of staying collectively with others – ijtimáyet – in the “Boarding” as well as the punctuality at lessons, consistency in studies, ease at revision, time saved in travel, are features not to be attained by students staying in their own homes. The supervision here over their studies is achieved with ease.

In my young days, how did I not undertake the supervision of the students! I used to pitch up at any time – sometimes after Maghrib, sometimes after

'Ishá, sometimes before Fajr, sometimes after Fajr. Chachá-Mia is sitting here – ask him.

Teachers – the mudarrisín – should Similarly, reside on the premises. If they stayed in the neighbourhood, it will take them approximately 10 minutes for them to get to their classes. But if they stayed on the premises they would be at their classes almost immediately. If finances allow, the houses of the mudarrisín should also be built on the premises.

These topics are mentioned incidentally.

Coming back to the Suffah: The sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم resided here to acquire 'ilm. They were so engrossed in this task that food was of secondary importance to them. If food was available, well and good; if not, it did not matter. What did Hadhrat Abú Hurairah رضی الله تعالی عنه say? He was also one of the As-Hábas-Suffah. "I used to feel faint and collapse at times. People thought that the jinn had got hold of me and, in that age of Ignorance, they used to pull my ears to 'cure' me! The simple truth was that I used to faint through lack of adequate food!"

Nowadays, despite being provided for, students still complain. This is a far cry from the dignity and majesty (shán) that students should have. The demands of 'ilm are various, one of which is to have hilm. Tulebá are expected to develop hilm in their quest for 'ilm. They should not be full of complaints, nor should they quarrel and fight among themselves.

Ikhtiláf – a difference of opinion – bound to appear

Hadhratwálá did point out in his wáz that ikhtiláf is bound to occur. Where do differences in viewpoint not exist? With ikhtiláf one can even expect khiláf (opposition). Ikhtiláf existed even between ustád and pupil – between Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه and his pupil, Imám Yúsuf رحمة الله عليه. Those were days of ijtihád, yet there was room for ikhtiláf. Ikhtiláf was in umúr-e-intizámiah (matters of administration), but not in mazhab (jurisprudence). There is still room for ijtihád in umúr-e-intizámiah, even though the doors are closed as far as ijtihád in Fiqh is concerned. With differences in opinion, there were also opposing stances, but never quarrels and disputes. The attitude adopted was: "You have understood it that way; we have understood it this way." And there the matter rested, without

disputes.

But do disputes not exist among others? Definitely they do: doctors dispute among themselves and so do lawyers, judges and administrators.

What a fine qissah was not related by Hadhratwálá in the wáz read yesterday, involving Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه and Qází Shureh! What an important mas’alah on ikhtiláf it demonstrated! Ofo! On the one hand was Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه a Jannatí, one of the Asharah-mubash-sharah – those who were given the glad tidings of Jannat while in this world! His intelligence was a byword, his ’ilm second to none: Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه was the one to be summoned to reply to questions posed by delegations coming to Madínah from outside. His mental agility was superb; his capabilities in arithmetical calculations were outstanding.

Should anybody have asked Qází Shureh whether Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه was truthful in his claim or not, Qází Shureh would unhesitatingly have taken qasm that he was truthful. “But,” Qází Shureh would have said, “I am helpless in the matter: It is a question of mu’ámalah and huqúqs (dealings and rights), which have to be according to the haqq of the Sharí’ah and the limits of the Sharí’ah, in accordance with the evidence produced. I, personally, have no choice in the matter. My decision will be based on the above criteria. My opinion is that the evidence of a child in favour of the parent is invalid.”

Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه did not challenge this opinion. He did not state that he had proof that a child could give evidence in favour of the parent. If he did not have such proof, why would he have brought his son forward? It should be remembered that Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه was the khalífah of the Islámic State at the time and, as such, he was Qází Shureh’s superior. Did he remove Qází Shureh from his post? Of course not! He happily accepted the decision of the qází as final. He was not even upset. Neither did he pass any comment on the merit of the decision.

In relating this excellent incident, Hadhratwálá remarked that this is the attitude the ’ulemá should have. ’Ulemá should neither dispute nor quarrel nor get involved in altercations like the common people. This only gives the man in the street an opportunity to ridicule the ’ulemá.

’Ulemá of old had ta’lím and tarbiyet

Question: If the ta’lím is the same, what is the difference between the ’ulemá of old and us?

Answer: They had ta’lím combined with a composite good character; whereas we have mere ta’lím without tarbiyet, without having developed a good, well balanced, congenial character. We have learning without a training in character development, without the akhláq-e-mahmúdah-hasanah (the praiseworthy qualities) being well grounded, without faná of the nafs. They had faná of the nafs – they took no offence.

Further on, see the hoslah (wisdom) of Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه. When the Yahúd admitted that the armour did belong to him and wished to return it, Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه responded by presenting the armour to the Yahúd as a gift!

Let us summarize the lessons to be learnt from this incident:

- ’Ilm and hilm should go hand in hand.
- Not to dispute.
- Not to take offence when one’s opinion is rejected in favour of an opinion that is contrary.
- Hoslah in dealings. Other words for hoslah are farzán and mardán (sagacity/ wisdom/ heroism.) These are lessons for the student – just as hilm goes with ’ilm, Similarly, hoslah also goes with ’ilm.

All this is mentioned incidentally, to demonstrate the shán of ’ilm – the honour, dignity and majesty to be accorded to ’ilme-Dín and the institution where ’ilme-Dín is taught, the madrasah. It is imperative to maintain this shán.

The madrasah is a basic institution. In our lectures, in the talks from the mimbar, the madrasah is referred to as our fortress, as our mahváfiz-khánah – it is the backbone of our Dín.

The need for kitábs

It is interesting to note that the Hadíth Sharíf referred to earlier use the words “tálibul/utlubul-’ilm” and not “tálibul/utlubul-kutub”. The initial teaching of Dín was without kitábs. The capability to memorise was amazing in the early days: on listening to a 100 verse qasídah just once, the listener

would be able to repeat it word for word! But, as the Muslims went into decline and enthusiasm waned and memories were not as keen as before, it became necessary to adopt the written word as an aid to teaching.

Again: What kitábs were in front of the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم? Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم used to speak and the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم used to listen. Their memories were excellent. They were enthusiastic. They took care in revising what they had learnt and enquired from each other on what they had missed out. This is the original and correct method of ta'lím.

This is the manner in which the Dín has reached us – initially without kitábs, but, later, through kitábs and formal lessons in the madrasah. For reasons already mentioned, it became impossible to teach without kitábs and, more so in this day and age, kitábs have become fundamental in ta'lím; and the madrasah must have prescribed textbooks in its syllabus.

The emphasis in the madrasah is on the important task of ta'lím – this is the shán of the madrasah. With this concentration on academic learning, there is no equivalent emphasis on practical aspects – there is little inclination towards tarbiyet.

The role of the khánqáh

Let us now proceed in another direction, towards that place that is called the khánqáh. The khánqáh is not khámkhá (nonsensical)! It has its place: the concentration here is on the important aspect of tarbiyet. Great, great 'ulemá have spent lengthy periods in the khánqáh, after graduating from the madrasah, to benefit from the shán that tarbiyet offers.

Incidentally, it is an unfair criticism for the madrasah to level at the khánqáh and say that the real khánqáh was the one that existed in those days when there were proper murabbí – those making tarbiyet of others – so that it was worthwhile for the madrasah student to spend some time there. Where are murabbí of that quality nowadays?

If this argument is valid, then the appropriate retort from the khánqáh is: Where are the tutors in the darsgáh like the tutors of the past? Are there any tutors like Maulánás Gangohí Sáhib, Qásim Sáhib, Ya'qúb Sáhib and Thánwí Sáhib? If the khánqáh lacks murabbí like those in the past, Similarly, the present day darsgáh lacks the tutors of the past. If you abandon residence at

the khánqáh, then, logically, abandon tutorials in the darsgáh as well! If you are not prepared to abandon these tutorials, why do you dissuade others from attending the khánqáh? Why do you place criticisms and objections in front of others and discourage them? Why make statements such as: “Staying in the khánqáh is a waste of time.”?

Do you understand or not yet?

In this age of our decline, just as the present tutors suffice, Similarly, you will find in the khánqáh that sheikh who is capable of making the tarbiyet of others. No age is desolate – zamánah kháli nahí. If you abandon the one, abandon the other as well. If you do not abandon the one, there is no question of abandoning the other! This is khídá (deception.)

To continue: The emphasis in the darsgáh is on ta’lím and the approach is through tutorials. The emphasis in the khánqáh is on tarbiyet, by tackling akhláq. Comparatively, akhláq takes priority, as seen by the fact that the 13 years of the Makkan Period were spent in building character; and a good character is impossible without proper tazkíyah of the nafs.

This process is not possible unless the person does not attach himself to the mashá’ikh and the khánqáh. Together with tarbiyet, the mashá’ikh will also give ta’lím to the tálib. In our context, this is that person who seeks the closeness of Alláh Ta’álá. This involves a process of self-rectification, called isláh.

Alláh Ta’álá states:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهٗ

And keep yourself steadfast with those who call out to their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His Countenance. (S.18.28.)

The meaning is that you (Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم) should sit firmly with those who are tálib. Set aside one such time as to sit closely with them, with steadfastness. After all, they are sincere in their quest. This is an indication that the sheikh should have one such period when he comes out to sit with the tálibín, who should gather around, as the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم used to do.

At such times the talk of the sheikh is not only on tarbiyet, but, in order

to achieve tarbiyet, he also gives ta'lím – the ta'lím is to put the theory of tarbiyet into actual practice while in the khánqáh: "Make zikr in this fashion, make muráqabah in this manner; make shaghl in this way. Do all these at this or that particular level. Adopt taqwá in this way."

Each tálib has gathered for tazkíyah-e-akhláq – to cure the nafs of the illnesses affecting it, to embellish the heart with spiritual effulgence. Each one's level of taqwá is different. Each one's illness is different. Therefore, each one's prescription and each one's restrictions (parhez) will differ, tailored to each one's personal needs.

Let us compare this to the tutorial in the darsgáh: The tutor takes the kitábs "Shar-e-Wiqáyah", "Hedáyah," and so forth, and gives a lesson from the chapter "Kitábut-Tahárat" (Book on Purification). The lesson does not merely state how istinjá should be performed. The tutorial will go into other details – there will be a section on usable water; how to recognise pák water from appearance, smell and taste; what water is pák; what water is ná-pák; how to make ná-pák water pák. You will notice that, though the chapter is on tahárat, the discussion must flow into several different channels. This is necessary in order for the tálib of záhirí tahárat to achieve his objective of tahárat in whatever situation he may find himself.

Similarly, the tálib attending the majlis is a tálib of bátiní tahárat. He has presented himself to sort out all the different problems that he encounters. The talk of the sheikh will be varied. Sometimes he relates some wáqi'ah or hikáyet.

This methodology is also used in the Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf. At times, there may be tartíb (methodology); at times, targíb (persuasion); at times, tahdhídh (prodding). The topics may also vary: the discussion may be on kibr, or it may drift to hasad, to qaná'at, to ikhlás, and so forth. If these discussions are not 'ilmí, then what are they?

The majlis of the sheikh is thus an 'ilmí tutorial without the aid of any textbook, providing both ta'lím and tarbiyet. Masá'il may not be listed in that much detail, but sufficient detail is provided for the needs of tálib of tarbiyet. And the subjects are those discussed in the darsgáh, taken from Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf:

لَا تَحَاسَدُوْا – *Do not be jealous one of the other.*

لَا تَبَا غَضُوْا – *Do not have animosity one for the other.*

وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا – *Do not backbite. (S.49.12.)*

إِنَّ اللهَ لايُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُوْرٍ – *Verily, Alláh does not love any vainglorious boaster. (S.31.18.)*

These subjects are obviously related to purity of the bátin and not to physical tahárat. This is the khánqáh – that place where one can purify one's bátin, with the appropriate ta'lím to enable correct tarbiyet.

In summary: Tarjumah, tafsíl and má'ní-záhiryah (translation, details and external meanings) will be dealt with in the tutorials of the madrasah darsgáh; whereas the intibáqí-taríq (method of application), with the necessary ta'lím for tarbiyet, will be dealt with in the khánqáh. In other words, academic knowledge will be acquired in the madrasah, but the practical application of that knowledge will take place in the khánqáh: Scrutiny and evaluation over here. Inspection and stock-taking take place over here in a khánqáh. This is what the khánqáh is for.

Muhásabah – stock-taking

حَاسِبُوْا قَبْلَ اَنْ تُحَاسَبُوْا

This Hadíth Sharíf states that one should take stock of oneself, take account of one's activities, before this is done for one on the Day of Qiyámat. Everybody knows what will transpire on that day in front of Alláh Ta'álá when rewards will be according to one's deeds. Another role of the sheikh as a muhtasib is indicated in this Hadíth Sharíf: He evaluates the tálib and he also gives ta'lím on the method of taking hisáb. When? And how? These are explained to each individual according to each person's requirements.

Ta'lím on zikr

The sheikh gives ta'lím on zikr. The Qur'án Sharíf commands us to be in constant zikr, this being an objective in itself. The ta'lím of the sheikh attempts to establish constant zikr in the tálib:

فَاذْكُرُوااللهَ قِيٰمًا وَّقُعُوْدًا وَّعَلٰى جُنُوْبِكُمْ ۚ

Then remember Alláh standing, sitting and reclining. (S.4.103.)

In addition, the sheikh shows the methods of producing a special effect in the heart, one of fervour, passion and yearning (zouqí and shouqí)). The method shown differs with each individual – the manner in which zikr should be done; the time during the day and night most beneficial; the quantity of the zikr at any one time. With regards to the quantity of zikr, the sheikh will further look at factors like the free time, strength and courage of the tálib.

Ta'lím is also given on the loudness of zikr:

وَاذْكُرْرَّبَّكَ فِيْ نَفْسِكَ

And remember your Rabb within yourself. (S.7.205.)

One person will be advised to make zikr silently; another will be told to raise his voice slightly; and the third would be instructed to make the zikr a bit louder still – again, according to the requirements of the moment and the individual.

This is all part of the ta'lím of the khánqáh. All this is within the boundaries set by the Sharí'ah, whether it is ashghál, azkár or muráqabát, as seen in the Qur'án Sharíf áyát stated above. Whatever ta'lím the sheikh gives is within the bounds of the Sharí'ah. Methods may differ, but a change in the tone does not change the reality.

It is to be emphasised that the tarbiyet and the intibáqiyet (character training and applications) of the khánqáh are the very lessons studied in the darsgáh. Change in terminology does not change the reality behind a particular item. Let us proceed further: You should know by now that the life of a mu'min is at no time free of 'ibádat. This was also stated in Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه wáz yesterday and it is something we all accept without argument. The Qur'án Sharíf states:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ ۝

And I have not created the Jinn and Mankind except that they should worship Me. (S.51.56)

But, there is something more to it:

Question: What is the command given in regard to the manner of ’ibádat?

Answer: With muráqabah. In other words, a mu’min’s whole life is never free of ’ibádat with muráqabah.

Hadíth-e-Hadhrat Jibríl عليه السلام – Muráqabah explained

What is the substantiating proof of this? It is the following: a long narration, called Hadíth-e-Jibríl عليه السلام which records the questions posed to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم by Hadhrat Jibríl عليه السلام and the answers given. After asking: “Min al-ímán (What is ímán)?” and receiving a reply, he asked: “Min al-Islám (What is Islám)?” After receiving the appropriate reply, he posed a third question: “Min al-ihsán (What is ihsán)?” Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم gave the following reply:

اَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللهَ كَاَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَاِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

That you worship Alláh as if you see Him; and if you are unable to see Him (know well) that He sees you.

Note that the word “an-ta’budu” (that you make ’ibádat) is used and not the word “an-tusallí” (that you perform namáz). Neither are the words “an-tusúmo” (that you keep rozah); “an-tuhajju” (that you perform hajj) used. No! Quite clearly the words are: “an-ta’budalláh ka-annaka tará-hu” – “that you make ’ibádat of Alláh Ta’álá as if you are seeing Him. And, if you are unable to see him, never mind, your faith and belief (i’tiqád) is that Alláh Ta’álá is hádhir-názir: thus your ’ibádat should be such that you are aware that He is seeing you! “Fa-innakayará-ke.” (For He is seeing you). Comparatively, it is easier to bear in mind that He is watching you.

Therefore, the awareness of the fact that Alláh Ta’álá is seeing you (yád) should be firmly established. At no time should this awareness be absent. This only comes with constant reminder – the moment one forgets, remind oneself; again, if one forgets, remind oneself; and again and again! Slowly, degree by degree, a stage will be reached when there will be constant remembrance (yád). In súfí terminology, this is the stage called “malake-

yád-dásht," where the heart is said to have become muzakkir.

Let us put it altogether again: From the previous áyet of the Qur'án Sharíf we come to know that the mu'min's sole duty is to make the 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá. In other words, no action of a mu'min is free of 'ibádat. In the above Hadíth Sharíf, the mu'min has been ordered to ensure that his 'ibádat has the quality of "ihsán" – that is, the muráqabah that Alláh Ta'álá is watching him. Placing these two together we can safely state that every act and deed of a mu'min-bandah, his every moment, should be 'ibádat with muráqabah-ihsán.

This explains muráqabah – the thought and contemplation that Alláh Ta'álá is watching me. Is this contrary to the Sharí'ah? Obviously not! This is directly from Hadíth Sharíf.

We now come back to zikr. The Qur'án Sharíf has numerous áyát commanding zikr. Two such áyát have just been quoted above. A zákir is not necessarily that person reciting with his tongue the Kalimah Sharíf or Durúd Sharíf or tasbíhát, but a zákir is every such person who is acting in obedience to the orders of Alláh Ta'álá, submitting himself to Him, with His yád in his heart and his work (whatever it may be) falls under the Laws of Alláh Ta'álá, every such person is a zákir.

This is supported by the following Hadíth Sharíf, taken from Hasne-Hasín:

كُلُّ مُطِيْعٍ لِلّٰهِ فَهُوَذَاكِرٌ

Every obedient servant of Alláh is a zákir.

One can go even further: Take it that, for a short duration while he is concentrating on his work, the thought of Alláh Ta'álá is not even in his heart. Yet, the work he is doing is performed as an act of obedience, in accordance with the laws of Alláh Ta'álá. In this situation, he is still a zákir!

For example: the husband approaches his wife in obedience to the command of Alláh Ta'álá, he is in zikr. During the act, his tongue is not engaged in zikr, yet he is in zikr. The proviso, of course, is that there is itá'ate-kámilah – complete and perfect obedience.

Out of the three specific items that the sheikh gives training on – namely ashghál, azkár and muráqabah – muráqabah and zikr have been explained with supporting proof from Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf. This brings us to the third item, shaghl (pl. ashghál).

Shaghl – the desired state in namáz

By definition, shaghl is to fix one's eyes on and stare at any one object, in order to bring a special benefit. There should not be even a flicker of an eyelid. And, at the same time, the heart must be kept engaged in the yád of Alláh Ta'álá.

This is the desired state one should be in during namáz. When one is standing in qiyám, one's gaze should be fixed at the spot where one's forehead is going to touch the ground in sajdah. Or, should one be peeping here and there, allowing all kinds of thoughts to enter one's heart? Obviously not.

Staring with a fixed gaze at one spot has the effect of warding off stray thoughts and aiding concentration. Instead of wandering hither and thither, one's thoughts will be controlled and one's concentration will improve.

And may Alláh Ta'álá bless Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه – and very much so! Why? In the situation when one is out in the countryside and it is time for namáz, Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه states that one should place a sutrah in front of one when standing up for namáz. This is to prevent passers-by from walking directly in front of you – they will walk around the sutrah. If you do not possess a sutrah, not even a stick to place in front of you, Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه states that one should draw a line in the sand at that point where one is going to make sajdah. Once again, may Alláh Ta'álá bless Imám Sáhib – he was a great súfí. Not only Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه, but all the Imáms were great súfís.

If somebody were to ask Imám Sáhib رحمة الله عليه: "Why draw a line? Passers-by will not notice the line, so of what benefit is it?" His answer would be: "It is of benefit to the mussallí – the one making namáz. His gaze can fix on the line and he can concentrate. There will be no dispersal of thoughts." Passers-by will not benefit, but the mussallí will have achieved the object of warding off stray thoughts and thereby concentrating on his namáz.

Imám Sáhib has given ta'lím on shaghl.

All three items discussed are to be found in namáz: Namáz is zikr from beginning to end; muráqabah is a state throughout; and shaghl is prescribed at every rukun, from the beginning when "Alláhu-Akbar" is recited till the final ending of "Assalámu-alaikum-wa-rahmatulláh." These essential items are taught by the sheikh in the khánqáh, ikmálin and itmámim – in supreme perfection. This is the khánqáh, the place where ta'lím and tarbiyet are to be found to the degree of ikmálin and itmámim. But for whom? For the tálibe-mukhlis – the seeker who is sincere. For the tálib who is mukhlis and sacchá – sincere and honest.

Presence of munáfiqín in the khánqáh

Why this stress? Because all types come to the khánqáh. There were munáfiqín in the time of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Various munáfiqín, big and small, attended his court even. So, why be amazed at the presence of such in the khánqáh? The ones to benefit, however, are those who are mukhlis and sacchá – these are the real tálib. If you see the other type in attendance, why blame the khánqáh? What fault is it of the khánqáh?

There were munáfiqín sitting on the Suffah itself; there were munáfiqín around Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم; munáfiqín were even found to be present among those writing down wahí even though this figure was absolutely small. This was the situation in the early period, that of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم and of the Khulafá-e-Rashidín. This situation did not improve as time went on and the era of decline set in. If some insincere ones find their way to the khánqáh in this age, why should this affect the khánqáh or the tálibul-'ilm?

If one were to apply the same scrutiny to the darsgáh, one will find even more such insincere ones in the madrasah. One will find very few students attending to their studies in the correct manner; being completely punctual in attendance; paying full attention to the tutor during lessons, without a moment's distraction even, learning with ifhám and tafhím (in-depth understanding), with ikmál and itmám (utmost perfection); aiming to gain full mastery of the subjects. The majority of the students will be otherwise, especially nowadays. If the khánqáh has two to four such insincere ones,

what are their numbers in the madrasah? Even more! If this is the situation in the madrasah, with the tálibe-sádiq in the minority, must one close the madrasah?

Do you understand? It is very necessary to discuss these issues. Alláh Ta'álá has caused these thoughts to intrude and issue forth and be presented to you. This is an assessment of the current situation, an insight into the times.

If there is no need for the khánqáh, then equally there is no need for the madrasah. If there is a need for the madrasah – the need is there and the need is great – then there is need for the khánqáh as well, to an even greater extent in this age.

Before, both student and tutor were of a different calibre. The tutor had the qualities of a sheikh and the student used to be a tálibe-sádiq, one with tahárat and taqwá. Despite (or, because of) these excellent qualities they still attended the khánqáh.

Taqwá – qissah of Mauláná Muzaffar Husain Sáhib

Take Mauláná Muzaffar Husain Sáhib. His qissah comes to mind at the moment, though there are numerous other qissas. He was a resident of Kándlah. His generation was just before that of Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه and Mauláná Muhammad Qásim Nánotwí رحمة الله عليه – the latter two were still in their youth at the time that Mauláná Muzaffar Husain had attained old age.

Anyhow, while still young, he had gone to complete his studies by Sháh Muhammad Isháq Sáhib رحمة الله عليه in Delhi. At the time, he had already completed courses in Fársí and a few other kitábs and he was already conversant with all the Fiqhí masá'il.

He arrived in Delhi and presented himself at the house of Sháh Muhammad Isháq Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. Mealtime came and he was served with dhál and rotí. He ate the rotí, but not the dhál.

When the dishes went back to the kitchen, Sháhsáhib's wife noticed the uneaten dhál. "Ofo! What kind of youngster is this? He ate the rotí, but not the dhál. Does he want to be served meat every day?" she commented dryly. Sháhsáhib said: "I will go and find out."

Investigate first. It is not correct to cast aspersions on anybody without first investigating and finding out the facts.

Sháhsáhib went to enquire. "My lad, you did not eat the dhál. Are you on some kind of diet? You ate the rotí, but not the dhál."

"Hadhrat, my heart did not desire it."

"No, no. I insist. Tell me the real reason."

"Hadhrat, the fact is that I detected that some sour mangoes had been added to the dhál, that is why I did not eat it."

At this point, it must be explained that, mostly, the sale of mango crops in those days was the same as is present these days in many areas. The farmer sells the fruit crop before the appearance of the mangos on the tree. Selling an unknown item is an illegal transaction – bei-bátil. Whoever buys those mangos does not become the legal owner after a bei-bátil.

Do you see his insight and taqwá? Yet, he had only gone to study! That was a wondrous age!

Sháhsáhib was wonder struck. "My thoughts did not even focus on this aspect!" He went inside and told the wife: "Alláh Ta'álá has sent a malak to us for our isláh!"

It does happen, at times, that certain matters have such fine points that these details escape the attention of many a learned person. When a junior points out something which is correct and haqq, it beholds the seniors to take note and accept. This is the attitude adopted by our akábir. Sháhsáhib had no hesitation in accepting the correct observation and attitude of the student. He said: "No mangoes are to be bought from the bazár in future until it has not been ascertained from which orchard they came – whether they came from an orchard where the fruit has been sold after the appearance of the crop or before its appearance."

That age of the tálibul-'ilm was such then – and nowadays it is such that using tá'wíl (re-interpretation) many matters are made já'iz.

This qissah also emphasises, once again, the importance of 'ilm, the great need for 'ilm and the madáris. 'Ilm is the foundation of all our deeds. There can be no amal without 'ilm and any amal without 'ilm is not qabúl – that deed is not accepted.

’Ilm & jihád: a comparison

The importance of ’ilm has already been discussed. The áyet quoted earlier, pointing out the importance of ’ilm in relation to jihád, has been brought to your notice already that, when the order for jihád is there, do not all go out in jihád, but some should remain in the company of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم; and when those who had gone out in jihád return, give them ta’lím – teach them what you have learnt; that ’ilm that you had attained, convey to them.

Despite this strong stress on ’ilm, the emphasis on the importance of ’ilm has been increased to a higher degree by Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم in the following Hadíth Sharíf:

مَنْ خَرَجَ فِىْ طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِىْ سَبِيْلِ اللهِ حَتّٰى يَرْجِعَ

Whosoever sets out to seek ’ilm is in the Path of Alláh until he returns.

“Fí-sabílilláh” – “In the path of Alláh” – is to be in jihád. This is the accepted meaning, as seen in other instances in the Qur’án Sharíf. And this phrase Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has applied to the tálib of ’ilm. That person who has left his home to acquire ’ilm, he is in the path of Alláh Ta’álá, he is in jihád. In other words, the tálib of ’ilm is of the mujáhidín – he is of those waging jihád.

The four trials in jihád

The obvious question is: With whom is the tálibul-’ilm making jihád? The answer is: With his nafs. The mufassirín have written lengthy commentaries on this Hadíth Sharíf. You are advised to read them.

Let us summarize their findings: What are the trials facing the mujáhidín?

ONE: Ilá-e-Dín, also called ilá-e-Kalimatulláh – to uphold the Dín/ Kalimah of Alláh Ta’álá. Jihád is not for territorial gain and aggrandisement. Jihád is for the sake of Dín – the purpose is to enable those who have the Dín to practise Dín properly by removing the obstacles that others had placed in their path; also, to stop the torment that others are inflicting on them. This is the first point in jihád – ilá-e-Dín.

The purpose of attaining 'ilm is the same: namely ilá-e-Dín. There is no other purpose except to uphold the Dín.

TWO: The second point is izlál-e-Shayátín – to disgrace and humiliate Shaitán, to weaken him. This also applies to the acquisition of 'ilme-Dín.

I am sure you are aware of the Hadíth Sharíf that describes Shaitán seating himself on his throne (takht) on the sea when evening approaches.

The difference between a karámat (miracle) & istidráj (deception)

Incidentally, this amazing feat of Shaitán is not termed a "karámat", but "istidráj". Any feat that appears to be supernatural or wondrous, shown by one not following the Sharí'ah, cannot be termed a "karámat". It is "istidráj" and a trap for the unwary – a trick to lead them astray.

Shaitán, as we all know, is the head of the kuffár – his kufr is the greatest – yet he has the capability of manifesting this amazing feat of setting his takht on the sea and gathering all his fellow Shayátín on it. Despite being weighty, the takht does not sink into the sea. This is "istidráj" which Alláh Ta'álá sets forth as a test. This is mentioned by the way, to warn the unwary not to be hoodwinked by those disobedient to Alláh Ta'álá.

To continue: When evening approaches, Shaitán spreads his takht on the sea and seats himself on it. His offspring, fellow-Shayátín, who had been roaming around since the morning spreading their evil, return to give their reports. Shaitán listens to all and comments indifferently and impatiently at each one's report and responds: "Yes, yes. Well done. Yes, yes. Well done." Then one gets up and says: "Listen to my report: Today I created friction between husband and wife, with the result that both flew into a rage – ghussah got hold of them."

It comes in the Hadíth Sharíf that if anyone is overcome with ghussah at the time that something goes against his temperament, in appearance he is a human being, but, in reality, he is a beast and he has approached the edge of Jahannam – a slight push and he is inside!

The little Shaitán continues: "Having caused them to fly into a fit of rage, I goaded them on till a stage was reached where the husband gave the wife three taláqs." At hearing this, Shaitán (senior) stands up in happiness and comes to pat the other Shaitán on his back. "Shábásh! Shábásh! You have

really done a great piece of work! Shábásh! Bravo!" Shaitán seats himself again.

Finally another Shaitán stands up. "Listen to me as well!" The big Shaitán asks. "What do you wish to say?" This Shaitán says: "A tálibul-'ilm was going for classes. I tackled him. I whispered first one thing then another to him, until I managed to stop him from proceeding to his class. I managed to get him to put his satchel down and got him involved in playing games. In this way, I prevented him from proceeding to acquire 'ilme-Dín." The big Shaitán again stands up in sheer joy. He comes and pats this Shaitán on his back and then clasps him joyfully to his breast. "Shábásh! Shábásh!" he cries exultantly.

Why did the big Shaitán joyfully clasp the other Shaitán to his breast? His reason is that he feels greatly offended at anybody attaining 'ilm of Dín. So to say he thinks as follows. "There is disgrace in this for me. When that child grows up he may become an 'álim of the Dín, a faqíh. How many sinners will he not bring back to the Straight Path! He will burden me like a mountain! He will be an obstruction in my scheming and istidráj."

That is why it comes in the Hadíth Sharíf:

فَقِيْهٌ وَاحِدٌ اَشَدُّ عَلى الشَّيْطَانِ مِنْ اَلْفِ عَابِدٍ

One faqíh is more burdensome on Shaitán than a thousand 'ábeds.

We have thus proved point number two, that a tálibul-'ilm acquiring 'ilme-Dín is a direct cause of izlál-e-Shayátín – disgrace and humiliation of Shaitán – to a complete degree.

The THIRD point: The mujáhid is involved in itti'ábe-nafs – putting the nafs in ta'áb and mushaqqat – placing the nafs under stress and involving it in toil and effort. The mujáhid combating the kuffár is exerting himself physically and he is under great pressure. The tálibul-'ilm is also involved in itti'ábe-e-nafs – he has left home and all the comforts that the home provides in order to attain 'ilm. Where is the luxury of home food and refreshing drinks, of rest and ease? This is itti'ábe-e-nafs, so that the tálibul-'ilm is in jihád because of itti'ábe-e-nafs.

The FOURTH point is kasre-nafs. "Kasr" means "to break". This is the

breaking of nafsání desires – breaking the lusts and passions of the carnal self. The eyes desire to roam hither and thither; the tongue wishes to speak uninhibitedly; the ears yearn to listen to what it should not. The tabiyet has to be restrained from all these desires of the nafs. To tire out the nafs with toil and effort is part of mujáhadah. To break the nafs by restraint and discipline is riyádhat.

For example: The nafs wishes to sleep a full eight hours, but in reality the tálibul-'ilm allows himself only three to four hours of sleep. In jihád as well there is kasre-nafs. Does not the enemy send beautiful women to tempt the mujáhidín? Our history bears testimony to how the Nasárá sent beautifully adorned women to tried to seduce the mujáhidín and how tempting goods and wealth were spread in front of them along the roads to make them victims of lust and greed. But what did the Nasárá find? Thirteen years of training the nafs had produced men of akhláq – disciplined characters. Gold and jewels meant nothing to them. Graceful and beautiful maidens were completely ignored! These, then, are the trials that those out in jihád come across. These are the very trials that face the tálibul-'ilm. That is why, as stated previously, the Hadíth Sharíf states:

مَنْ خَرَجَ فِيْ طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللهِ حَتّٰى يَرْجِعَ

Whosoever goes out to seek 'ilm is in the Path of Alláh until he returns.

The person referred to is the tálibul-'ilm – that student who has a talab for 'ilme-Dín. The word "talab" appears in the Hadíth Sharíf. The key word is "talab," meaning "producing a taqádhá." The word "taqádhá", in turn, is an inner state of disquiet that exists at not having attained one's objective; a state of unease that does not disappear until and unless one's objective is acquired. This is also called a "hál" in the terminology of the súfís. The talab has been created within the student to attain 'ilm; a hál has been created within him for 'ilm. One simple example of such a hál is real hunger, which causes a state of unease that disappears only on satisfying that hunger.

Do you understand, ayyuhat-tulláb (O you students), my dear brothers, my dear buzurgs?

Ayyuhat-tulláb! The tálibul-'ilm has set out with the talab of 'ilm. This is

the talab, the taqádhá, that the student should have that, until he has not attained his objective, he is not at ease. The motivation and desire (taqádhá) should be so great that he does not make friends with others; he does not sit here and there involving himself in useless and superfluous talks and activities (láya'ní-o-lahú). He discards all these in his talab and taqádhá of 'ilm. He is at ease only after having prepared his lesson. He is punctual in his attendance; he listens attentively to the tutor; he then revises what he has been lectured on. If he misses out on anything he is filled with regret. This is the tálibul-'ilm.

My dear brothers, my dear buzurgs! This is the meaning of talab! Talab is one thing and kasb (acquisition) is another. The word used in the Hadíth Sharíf is talab and not mere acquisition (kasb). Mauláná Rúmí رحمة الله عليه puts it as follows:

A tálib should have an extreme degree of forbearance and tolerance;
I have never heard of an alchemist sitting back in defeat.

What Mauláná Rúmí رحمة الله عليه is saying is: "I have not heard of one desirous of dunyá (a materialist) sitting down, tired and dejected. O you desirous of Dín, shame on yourselves that you are just the opposite! Just look around you at those involved in worldly activities: they do not rest until their objectives are achieved."

So, the one desirous of Dín (talabgár) should be "báyád sabúr-o-hamúl" – tolerant and forbearing, having a hold on his tabiyet, exercising great self-restraint when he encounters anything against his temperament. Note that the words "sabúr-o-hamúl" is used, not just "sabr" and "hámil" – not merely showing patience, but exercising immense tolerance and forbearance. If anybody swears at him, he simply ignores the abuse. If anybody slaps him, he takes no notice. If somebody upsets him, he does not flare up. This is the tálibul-'ilm – the one so desirous of 'ilm that he does not rest until his objective is attained. How can he flare up in anger?

We have shown that in the correct context all the thawáb that the mujáhid accumulates, also accrues to the tálibul-'ilm; all the fadhá'il that apply to the mujáhid, also apply to the tálibul-'ilm. In the correct meaning, the tálibul-'ilm is the personification of the fadhá'il of jihád – the tálibul-'ilm is the authoritative claimant of the virtues listed for waging jihád.

Remember it well that today you have come to know the reality of ’ilm: how high and noble ’ilm is, how high is the status of ’ilm.

Every obedient servant of Alláh is a zákir

The genuine tálibul-’ilm, with the qualities mentioned above, has another claim as well. He performs what is fardh and wájib; he is punctual with his sunnate-mu’aqqidah; he acts with taqwá – such a tálibul-’ilm enjoys a station no less than that of one performing abundant nawáfil and making abundant zikr. In comparison, this tálibul-’ilm may not be performing much nawáfil, his zikr and tasbíhát may be minimal, but abstaining from sin and performing what is fardh, not allowing his namáz to become qadhá, performing what is wájib and sunnate-mu’aqqidah, he has a stage even higher. He is in obedience all the time; he is with taqwá all the time; he is in ’ibádat all the time; he is zákir all the time. He is the personification of the Hadíth Sharíf:

كُلُّ مُطِيْعٍ لِلّٰهِ فَهُوَذَاكِرٌ

Every obedient servant of Alláh is a zákir.

Today the importance of ’ilm has been placed in front of you: The very high status of ’ilme-Dín has been related to you. What has also been adequately shown to you is that ta’lím that is attained in the darsgáh will reach completion and perfection (ikmályet and itmániyet) in the khánqáh. Any deficiencies will be corrected in the khánqáh, where aptness and practical application are taught (intibáqiyet and tatbiqát). Perfection in záhirí a’mál cannot be achieved without the bátiní akhláq.

For example: Namáz is part of the záhirí a’mál. Perfection in namáz cannot be achieved without having the quality of ihsán as explained in the Hadíth-e-Jibríl quoted and explained earlier. Ihsán forms part of the bátiní akhláq and is elucidated in the khánqáh. Both záhirí a’mál and bátiní akhláq are brought to perfection in the khánqáh. The state of maqáme-ihsán is attained. Ikmáliyet and itmámiyet are thus achieved.

The great need for both the darsgáh and the khánqáh has been laid out in front of you. Supporting wáq’íát, Qur’án Sharíf áyát and Hadíth Sharíf have been quoted and the example of the As-Hábas-Suffah has been brought to your notice.

Summary & du'á

We have need for the acquisition of 'ilm, with effort and serenity, for which we are dependent on the madrasas. And for practical application of 'ilm we are dependent on the khánqas. The dire necessity for both have been explained in detail to you, by the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá.

May Alláh Ta'álá grant us the taufíq, in the correct meaning, to be tálib of tarbiyet and tálib of 'ilme-Dín, with ikhlás and sidq.

QISSAH: THE KHAUF OF ALLÁH TA'ÁLÁ OF A TÁLIBUL-'ILM

[- as related by Hadhrat Muftí 'Aqílur-Rahmán Sáhib, who writes:]

This bandah saw a wáqi'ah in a certain kitáb:

A tálibul-'ilm was staying in a masjid situated in the wilderness. It so happened that a nobleman's daughter, who was a keen huntress and who had been out hunting with her friends, got separated from her group. Wandering around, completely lost, she came upon this masjid. Seeing the tálibul-'ilm inside, she expressed a wish to sleep over for the night. She was dressed in male clothing, but the tálibul-'ilm made out from her voice that this was actually a young female. He raised no objection to her request. She entered and she went to one corner and fell asleep.

He went to his place and slept. In the middle of the night the tálibul-'ilm's nafs started instigating him, telling him: "She is a girl. She is weak. We are completed secluded." The tálibul-'ilm got up. There was an open oil lamp burning. He went over to it and placed his finger in the flame and kept it there for a moment. He then went back to sleep. It was not long when his nafs started troubling him again. He again went over to the oil lamp and placed his finger in the flame. He then went back to sleep. This procedure repeated itself several times. In the meantime, the girl, now wide awake, was watching all this.

When morning came and they got up, the girl asked: "Why did you keep

on burning your finger the whole night through?" The tálibul-'ilm evaded giving an answer and remained silent. However, the girl insisted he tell her. Finally he said: "I am also human. I also possess a nafs inside of me. From your voice I recognised that you were a girl. My nafs started to incite me. I responded by telling my nafs: 'The punishment for what you are inciting me is the fire of Jahannam. This fire is 70 times harsher than the fire in this world. First, show that you can endure the pain of this fire, then I will fulfil your desire.' In this way, by burning my finger, I broke its desire."

There are many such qissas of tálibul-'ilms who have the fear of Alláh Ta'álá in their hearts. Here only one episode has been noted down.

BOOKLET NUMBER THREE

Originally published Rabi-ul-Awwal 1411- October 1990

Revised January 2005 – Zil-Hajj 1425

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Alhamdulilláh, with the assistance of friends and the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our sheikh, this third booklet is ready.

Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه stated on several occasions that just one discourse is sufficient for anyone with sincerity. In other words, just one discourse has in it enough material – be it a mere sentence – to set the seeker of Truth in the right direction.

Booklet Number One, with the main theme of the methodology of self-rectification, has enough material in it to have given most of us direction in our efforts. It not only gives us the logical reasoning behind the system adopted by a sheikh in Tasawwuf, but it also has sufficient practical points to keep one busy with oneself-improvement: e.g. "paying back" qadhá namáz, improving the quality of one's 'ibádat, and so forth.

The second booklet on 'ilm, jihád and the khánqáh – is a "breather" for the beginner while he reads Booklet Number One over and over again to digest and assimilate the many points made in it. That is not to say that Booklet Number Two is of any lesser value. Some of the points made in it are as follows:

It is a superb defence of the khánqáh. The bases for the various exercises performed in the khánqáh are justified from Qur'án Sharíf Hadíth Sharíf.

If any had the misconception that the khánqáh is meant only for sinners who wish to reform, this false idea has also been forcefully demolished.

The importance and status of 'ilm and the madrasah have been emphasised. Befuddled thinking on the important subject of jihád has been cleared. The aims of jihád and conditions for jihád have been laid down quite clearly. And so forth. Most readers will have gained much more from

the discourse than the few points made above.

So, we now come to Booklet Number Three. The tone and content of this discourse is very different from the others. The value and importance of this discourse will be quite obvious to the reader. Disclosing anything more would be to spoil the surprise awaiting the reader! Varying topics are discussed in this discourse, but, for the sake of having a title, I have labelled this discourse "FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIP; PRAISE AND CENSURE."

A problem facing many readers has been to remember the meanings of the Urdú/Arabic words. To leave these words out completely would seriously affect the discourse. For easier reference, the glossary appears at the end.

Dr.I.M.

[This is a translation of a majlis-e-khás held by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه *in Jalálábád, India, on the 2nd April 1989, corresponding to 24th Shábán 1409.]*

FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIP; PRAISE AND CENSURE.

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

If the sahábah-kirám رضی الله تعالی عنهم were to arrive here from the world of Departed Souls (Álame-Barzakh) and see us as in our present state, they would be astonished at the strangeness: in what state were we when they left us and what is our condition now!

Respect and honour among the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم

Let me quote just one example of their behaviour:

Imám Hasan (or Husain) رضی الله تعالی عنه the grandson of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم went to see a sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه who was a muhaddith, to ask some mas'alah on some aspect of Dín. On reaching the sahábí's رضی الله تعالی عنه residence, he waited outside for the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه to come out. This was the correct etiquette in this situation. When the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه came out, he greeted him. Recognising the honoured guest, the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه said: "You should have called me from inside." Imám Hasan (or Husain) رضی الله تعالی عنه

replied. “I acted according to my grandfather’s instructions.”

The sahábah رضی اللہ تعالی عنهم had been ordered not to call out to Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم when desiring to ask a mas’alah, but to wait outside.

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُنَادُوْنَكَ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ۝ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوْا حَتّٰى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝

Lo! Those who call you from behind the private apartments, most of them have no sense. And if they had had patience till you came forth to them, it had been better for them. And Alláh is forgiving and merciful. (S.49.4-5.)

He continued: “I have come to enquire about some Díní matter from you.” The sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه gladly obliged. A discussion took place and the matter was resolved.

It so happened that the sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه had to travel someplace. His horse arrived at that moment and he walked over to his horse. Imám Hasan (or Husain) رضی اللہ تعالی عنه walked to the opposite side of the horse and held the stirrup steady in anticipation of the sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه mounting. The sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه became embarrassed that such an honoured person as the grandson of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم should stand in attendance on him. Instead of mounting he walked over to Imám Hasan (or Husain) رضی اللہ تعالی عنه and said: “It is very gracious of you to hold the stirrup for me, but, really, it is not necessary.”

Imám Hasan (or Husain) رضی اللہ تعالی عنه said: “This is just to enable you to mount with ease. It is my grandfather’s instructions that one respectfully serves one’s ustád.”

You will notice that there was no thought as to whose grandson he was and that this service was below his dignity. He had no airs about him.

The sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه responded by taking the hand of Imám Hasan (or Husain) رضی اللہ تعالی عنه and raising it to his lips, he kissed it. “If your grandfather had instructed you in that manner, then he has instructed us in this manner.”

Love and affection for the progeny of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم

Muhabbat! Love and affection! Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم has said that he

desires no service for his progeny. His only desire is that we love them.

قُلْ لَا اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبٰى

Say (O Muhammad صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم): 'I am not asking you for remuneration, except for family love and harmony."

Muhabbat is an elevated and noble quality. It springs from the heart. True muhabbat has its source in the central depths of the heart, in the very core of the heart. True muhabbat is no ordinary thing, but a very precious gift.

Hadhratwálá رحمۃ اللہ علیہ related an interesting incident:

A buzurg went to see another buzurg... There is an old saying:

کبوتر با کبوتر – باز با باز

Pigeons keep company with pigeons, hawks with hawks.

[See English proverb: Birds of a feather flock together. – Tr.]

A person tends to keep company with those of a similar temperament.

The one buzurg arrived at the house of the other buzurg. After salám was made, the second buzurg enquired from the first: "What can I do for you?" The first buzurg replied: "I am in need of 500 rúpís." "Very well." Without hesitation, the second buzurg went and brought forth 500 rúpís which he gave to the first buzurg who thanked him and left. The second buzurg then went back into his house. He went and sat on his bed and started weeping.

Wives are normally personal and informal, as they should be. Husbands and wives have a special intimate and informal relationship which allows them to talk openly to one another. What type of relationship would they have if this informality was not there? But, a pity and a shame! Hái-afsos! In this day and age there are no men left – men in the true sense, whether they are husbands or noble heads of families. I have seen another age where the gentry consisted of noblemen and husbands who were men of superb qualities. But, times have changed and this age is as different from that as the heavens differ from the earth.

It is a wife's privilege to be personal and informal to whatever degree.

Even if she uses the informal "tú" (you) instead of the respectful "tum" (thou) when speaking, she does it out of muhabbat. Dear servants of Alláh Ta'álá, do not take her to be disrespectful and rude. Please bear in mind that Alláh Ta'álá is addressed mostly as "tú".

To continue: The wife saw her buzurg husband sitting and crying. She said: "Wáh, miyán! Wáh! In unbridled enthusiasm (josh) you handed over 500 rúpís. Now miyán is greatly aggrieved, crying his heart out at losing 500 rúpís! So, why hand over the money in the first place?" The buzurg replied calmly: "That is not why I am shedding tears." The wife asked: "Then what is the reason?" The buzurg said: "I have good cause for shedding tears: After my death I will be brought in front of Alláh Ta'álá to account for myself. If Alláh Ta'álá were to ask me: 'Why was it necessary for your friend to come begging at your door? Why did you not keep yourself informed of his circumstances and go yourself to his house to assist when the need arose? Why did he have to come to you?' If this is what I am asked, what answer will I give...?"

This incident was narrated to us by Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه. He used to discuss a wide variety of topics in his majális, all connected with isláh. Do not have the misconception that only dharb was discussed: "Il-lalláh! Il-lalláh!" and still louder "Il-lalláh! Il-lalláh!"

It is very easy to make zikr in this manner. It has a joy of its own. But be careful: immersed in the joy of your zikr, do not increase the loudness of your voice. Your duty is to inform your sheikh of your enthusiasm and fervour. He will then use his discretion to increase, decrease or even stop the zikr. This is obedience (ittibá').

Just look: Hadhrat Uwais Qarní رحمة الله عليه, despite his passionate desire to see Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم did not undertake the journey to Madínah without informing him and obtaining his permission. Incidents related about his great love for Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم would amaze us. Yet his restraint demonstrates what obedience really means.

Josh is nothing; hosh is something

What is unbridled enthusiasm (josh)? Nothing. Sensibility (hosh) even without josh is something. Hosh is of great use and service. In fact, there

is nothing of greater service than hosh. Whereas josh by itself? Don't ask! It is of no service – it is a useless commodity leading to destruction.

Take the illustration of a pot of food cooking on the stove:

While the cooking is going on there is a lot of josh – boiling and steaming with a lot of noise – but the food is not ready to eat as yet. It is of no value. Let this phase of josh pass and the food allowed to simmer – it is now so quiet that one may not even be aware that curry is being cooked. Yet, lift the lid and the aroma of delicious food, ready to be eaten, fills one's nostrils. This end product is of great value.

There are three stages that a sálik goes through in Sulúk:

The first is of the beginner, who is called the *mubtadí*; the second is of the intermediate, called the *mutawassat*; and the third is that of the *muntahí*, the accomplished.

The condition of the muntahí is like that food that is finally cooked – tranquil and quiescent. The josh, the unbridled enthusiasm and the stormy turbulence, are features of the mutawassat, the in-between stage. The muntahí does not exhibit these features, except rarely. Even then these features are chance happenings, lasting a very short duration only and at a very low level.

These are important masá'il connected with Sulúk. These are masá'il related to emotional states and conditions (hál and kaifiyát.) One is amazed at that sálik who gets himself entangled in these states. Whenever he has to inform his sheikh of his condition he keeps repeating the same emotional states, showing his obsession with them. The sheikh is watching: "Oh yes," the sheikh tells himself. "He is still green, still half-ripe, still bitter-sweet, still immature."

This digression followed the qissah of the buzurg giving his friend, a fellow buzurg, 500 rúpís. But – a note of warning! – do NOT deduce from this qissah that you should now act in a similar manner, that you should now give money freely to anybody who declares his friendship. Beware! Don't ever do a thing like that.

To imitate an action also requires intelligence – naql requires 'aql. Do not make a monkey out of yourself – do not be a "monkey see monkey do."

Real and false friends and friendship

Let me point out that in our qissah both persons were buzurgs; both had sincerity and honesty. The asking and giving was a once in a while episode and not a regular affair. Fair enough, should you find a friend who has proved himself to be a real buzurg, filled with a similar degree of sincerity and honesty, then you may go ahead. Such a person will rarely ask for assistance and he will do so only when in dire need.

However, in these times such sincerity is rare. Do not be taken in by someone merely proclaiming his friendship. Do not be fooled into thinking that mere statements of friendship indicate sincerity and honesty. Do not judge today's friends on the merits of a bygone age.

Which reminds me of another qissah. There are youngsters present in today's majlis. They, especially, should listen with open ears.

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه narrated:

There was a youngster – like one of today's youngsters – who had become friendly with another youth. The youngster's elderly father noticed his coming home late at nights and enquired: "One night, two nights, three nights and now every night you are coming home very late. What is your story?" The youngster replied: "I go to visit a friend of mine. Sitting and talking with him, it tends to get a bit late." The father said: "Really? Oho! There are still such friends today?" The father continued. "When you are about to visit your friend tomorrow, let me know. I also wish to meet this dear friend of yours."

The following evening, the youngster got ready and informed his father that he was about to leave to visit his friend. His father said: "Very well. I will be with you in a minute." The father kept himself busy with first one task and then another, causing some delay. The youngster became restless. "Don't fret. I am coming now," the father said. Deliberately he busied himself some more until it became quite late. "At last I am free. Let us go," he said.

The streets were empty. It was close to midnight and most people had retired for the night. On reaching the friend's house, the youngster knocked on the door and called out to his friend. His friend enquired from inside. "Who is it?"

Mind you, the friend still wants to know who it is! The youngster gave his name. “Oh! It is rather late... Never mind. Hang on.” The friend came to the door and opened it. “Why have you come so late?” he asked.

The father had coached his son along the way as to what to say. Accordingly, the son replied: “Some problem has cropped up causing my delay. I have landed myself in some problem.” The word “problem” had a noticeable effect on the friend. He yawned and said: “I was fast asleep. I am still feeling heavy headed and my mind is not quite clear. What you do is come back in the morning. Then we will see what is what.” Saying this, the friend closed the door, fastened the door chain and went back to bed.

After a few moments of deathly silence the father spoke: “I have seen your friend of these times. And so have you. Now you come with me. I also have a friend from the old days. He has gone quite old and so have I. I have not seen him for ages, but, never mind, let me show you what type of friend he is.”

Late as it was, father and son proceeded to the house of the father’s friend. When they reached there the father knocked on the door and called out to his friend. The knocking woke up the friend and he called back from inside: “I’ll be with you in a minute.” You will note that he did not ask “Who is it?” Even after an absence of several years he had recognised the voice immediately, in contrast to the youngster’s friend.

He did not come to the door “in a minute”. There was some delay. And when he did open the door he presented a strange spectacle as he stood in the doorway: in his one arm he was clutching a bag; in his other arm he had a stick; and on his head was balanced a pot!

After saláms were exchanged, the father asked his friend: “What is all this?” The friend replied: “Nothing really. When I recognised your voice the thought struck me that, coming at this time of the night after an absence of several years, you must have some special problem. I have hurriedly made these few preparations and this caused the delay in my coming to the door.” The friend went onto explain: “This pot on my head has some food – if you have nothing to eat, this is to take home for your family. This bag in my hand contains money – if some creditor is making life difficult for you, this is to settle your debts. Thirdly, it may be that some enemy is

after your blood. I may be old, but I can still wield a stick quite deftly and I'll contribute at least two or three shots with this stick."

The father reassured his friend. "No. There are no problems with food or money. There is also no fight. It is just that this son of mine used to come home late at night because of some friend of his. We went and saw this friend. I, in turn, offered to show him my old friend, which I have done. Shukria – thank you very much. Really, I am not in need of anything. Please forgive us for inconveniencing you at this late hour." "You are welcome. It is your right," his friend said. Making salám, father and son took their leave.

The lesson on the true friendship that existed in those years had been forcefully driven home to the youngster. This is not an age in which you will find such friendships. So called friends have earned some fancy titles for themselves:

– Chamchí-yár – *Friend of the tablespoon.*
– Dastarkhán-ke-yár – F*riend of the table spread.*
– Muhazzab-dákú – *Cultured/sophisticated thief.*

And so forth.

Exchanging sand for silver

Let me illustrate by relating a sequence of events that Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه narrated to us:

There resided in Thánah Bhawan the son of a wealthy noble. His father had passed away, leaving him much wealth in the form of income producing property, farmlands and cash. A number of hangers-on surrounded him very quickly and it was not long before all his cash was spent. He then sold all his properties. When the money from the sale of these properties got finished he put up the farmlands for sale.

Some well-wishers, true friends of his late father, saw the deterioration in his affairs and tried to advise him. "Arè miyán!" They tried to make him understand: "Just think how hard your father struggled to achieve some security for you, his only son. Don't throw everything away." The son responded by saying: "My father was a fool! He gave away silver and accumulated sand. I am not so stupid. I am more intelligent: I give away

sand and acquire silver."

In those days the rúpí coin was made of silver. There was no paper money. In buying property and farmlands (sand) the father had to pay in silver coins. The son considered himself wiser in getting silver (rúpís) for the properties and farmlands (sand) that he was selling.

Yet, what does the Hadíth Sharíf say?

عَنْ سَعِيْدِبْنْ حُرَيْثٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُوْلُ مَنْ بَاعَ مِنْكُمْ دَارًا اَوْ عِقَارًا فَاِنَّهٗ فَقَمِنٌ اَنْ لَّا يُبَارِكَ لَهٗ اِلَّا اَنْ يَّجْعَلَهٗ فِيْ مَثْلِهٖ

In essence this means that whosoever has property, land or farms should not sell them. The reason is obvious. These are solid and permanent investments. Cash, on the contrary, is liquid and changeable. Property will give an income. Farms will produce crops. On the other hand, cash will be spent – cash in itself is non-productive. Yes, if one wishes to buy a better property or farm, then you may sell what you have. In this instance it is more of an exchange than a selling off. This is the extent to which Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had concern for us, that he even advised us on worldly affairs for our material wellbeing and comfort.

The son acted contrary to the Hadíth Sharíf. Moreover, he considered himself to be clever and his father to be stupid. Can anyone make such a thick skull understand?

As an example of how his friends made use of him the following incident is related:

A friend came to visit him, looking sad and dejected. "Why so sad today?" the son asked. The friend said: "Nothing serious really. There is a fair in Mírath and I had a desire to go. Not being able to go is making me feel rotten." The son: "Why? What is the problem?" The friend said: "To go there and also have money for the various exhibitions..." The son said: "That is no problem. Feeling better?"

The friend said: "Yes, but... To go alone without congenial company, one cannot really enjoy oneself." The son responded: "Sure. Sure." The son asked how much he required. The friend indicated the sum. The son very generously handed the money over.

This was the manner in which he spent on his friends. The net result was

that soon he had no property, no farmlands and no cash. He was reduced to begging and existed on kindly hand-outs from relatives in Hyderabad and elsewhere.

His friends? They had quietly disappeared. This is the friendship of these times.

It is necessary to give a detailed explanation of friendships in modern times, in case you wish to imitate that buzurg who gave his fellow buzurg 500 rúpís. Never mind 500, do not give even 5! Otherwise, he will be back the next day for more. Once you give something, he now comes on a regular basis. He is not one in need, but one who has a habit of asking – he is not a sáhibe-hájit, but a sáhibe-ádit.

I speak from experience. Let me relate what happened some years ago. In those days my rooms were across the courtyard from here, upstairs. I am now speaking of a time when commodities were inexpensive: Have you seen times when one rúpí could buy 16 kg. of wheat? Or even 8 kg. or 4 kg.? I doubt it.

In any case, one day a perfect gentleman came to see me. He was well dressed in an achkan and he carried a cane in his hand. He spoke a polished and refined Urdú. From what he said I gathered that he was in some financial difficulty. One does not give such a cultured person, well dressed and cane in hand, 5 or 10 rúpís. I took out 30 rúpís and handed the sum to him. 30 rúpís of those days most probably equal 3 000 rúpís nowadays. He accepted the money and left. The following year he was back. And he comes back every year for his 30 rúpís!

Yes, one year I gave him less than 30 rúpís. He was quick to notice: "Every year you give 30. This time it is less than 30," he reprimanded. Ofo! Very well. I filled in the deficit.

I am going into a fair amount of detail in telling you all about the 500 rúpís of our qissah in order to make you fully knowledgeable. It should not be a case of:

ĥÎĤijÍ ĩîĄç ōġ ĢĴħ Ĭ – ĥÎß ĩîĄç ĢĴ±ã ĢĴħ

In essence, this saying means that a person with half-baked Díní knowledge is a danger to one's ímán, just as a half-baked doctor, a quack, is a danger to one's life. One does not want the situation where you tell

yourself: "Hadhratjí mentioned a qissah wherein the lesson was that friendship was to give money to friends at their homes," and you also go and give money at the homes of those coming to ask. I want to emphasise again that in our qissah both were buzurgs, both had sincerity and honesty, and both recognised the rights and limits of true friendship.

Nowadays, so-called friends prey on others, growing fat themselves, while their victims die thin and frail.

Ask from a bádsháh or a walí

To put the perspective straight: While the Sharí'ah has forbidden asking, it has also allowed asking. If you are forced into a situation where you have to ask from others (that is, you have become a sáhibe-hájit), then ask from a bádsháh (king) or from a true walí.

Why? Here are the reasons: To beg or ask is to put oneself into disgrace. A king, however, has such a lofty worldly status that he is beyond looking with contempt at anybody. He does not look down on those coming to him with their needs. His heart is too magnanimous and his wisdom too farsighted to stoop to such pettiness. Yes, a king is the person to ask from.

Or ask from a true walí-buzurg, not a bogus one. We said that begging or asking is associated with humiliation. But a true walí does not look with contempt at anybody. On the contrary, he considers himself to be the most despicable creature on earth. So there is no humiliation in asking from such a person who has such a low opinion of himself. Such a walí considers himself to be more miskín (poor) than anybody else; he has a desire to die in a state of miskín, and he desires to be raised in the company of the misákín in the hereafter. This desire, this du'á, is in keeping with the teachings of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَحْيِنِيْ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّ اَمِتْنِيْ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّاحْشُرْنِيْ فِيْ زُمْرَةِ الْمَسَاكِيْنِ

O Alláh! Keep me alive in a state of miskín. O Alláh! Grant me death in a state of miskín. And, O Alláh! Raise me up (in the hereafter)

in the group of misákín.

What does this mean? One person who read this Hadíth Sharíf came up to me and said: "Hadhrat, to be in a state of miskín is to be in poverty.

This is a very difficult situation to be in. A miskín has nothing to eat and he has nothing to wear. How can one possibly make du'á to be kept in a state of miskín and to die as one?"

Oho! That is not the meaning of miskín, to be financially destitute. The meaning of miskín in this context is 'ijz-o-inkisárí – humility and humbleness – and kasre-nafs – broken nafsání desires. This means: to consider oneself the most wretched creature on earth and not to look with contempt at anyone else. This is the meaning attached to the word miskín. So, if you have to ask, ask from a walí: he considers himself to be the most contemptuous creature on earth and he does not look down on anyone else.

To be in need (sáhibe-hájit) is one thing. To be in the habit of asking (sáhibe-ádit) is another. In this day and age the sáhibe-ádit are plentiful; those in real need are, but few.

Muhabbat – real, true love and affection – is a rare and wonderful quality, more especially in this age. But, do not be fooled by a person merely proclaiming his affection. One has seen enough tragedies resulting from such situations.

Hypocrites are of two types: i'tiqádí and amalí

In the time of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم there were also those who falsely proclaimed their muhabbat. They even sat in his majális and made namáz behind him. These were the munáfiqín who were insincere in their beliefs (i'tiqád). Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم was aware of them: he was kept informed about them through wahí. This category of hypocrite has ceased to exist according to the Sharí'ah. A person is free to choose belief (ímán) or un-belief (kufr). Anybody choosing kufr need not hide behind a mask of ímán. The category of hypocrite seen in abundance now, is in matters of deeds and actions. These comprise the munáfiqíne-amalí.

Seeing there were hypocrites in the time of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم, there is no reason to expect hypocrites not to be present in the company of a walí. The difference between the two groups of hypocrites is that the former consisted of hypocrites in i'tiqád and the latter consists of hypocrites in amal, as already explained. The i'tiqádí hypocrites were given

due consideration by Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Similarly, you will find the walí being considerate to the amalí hypocrites around him to a greater extent.

One reason, among several, for giving consideration to the i'tiqádi hypocrites was the following: the general community, as well as foreign countries, were not aware of the hypocrites. In their eyes everybody was Muslim, including these who were outwardly Muslim, but who had kufr in their hearts. Any difference in attitude towards them would have been misunderstood by others. Thus each person was dealt with according to his outward presentation as a Muslim. The hypocrites portrayed themselves as Muslims in order to participate in the wealth of the Muslims, so that they could also share in the booty coming to the Muslims.

Similarly, we see in this age the (amalí) hypocrite attaching himself to a famous buzurg – one in whom the public has faith and confidence. The hypocrite will be seen visiting the buzurg, staying with him and proclaiming his affiliation to him. Why? The objective is to attain some worldly benefit, some material gain from others by using this connection with the buzurg. The buzurg may be fully aware of what is going on, but he will not say anything. A walí of Alláh Ta'álá prefers to keep silent.

It happened with our Hají (Imdádulláh) Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه is the sheikh of my sheikh. That is, he is your "great-grandpír" in the genealogy of our silsilah. Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه related this incident:

A person came up to Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه and said: "Hadhrat, there is a certain person who is posing as your son-in-law and thereby collecting money for himself from your other muríds." Of course, Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه had no daughter, no son – no children whatsoever! Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه was a unique and wonderful buzurg of the time. He remarked: "Arè bháí – my dear brother – up to now nobody has benefited from me as far as Dín is concerned. If somebody is now, at least, deriving some material benefit from me, shall I stop him also?"

Such was our Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه. We are all aware of the great auliyá produced at his hands, by the grace of Alláh Ta'álá, yet just see his humble attitude. Others may not be so daring as to pose as sons-in-law. Some content themselves by establishing a relationship with a sheikh, with or

without becoming bai'at, to derive some worldly benefit. They make no effort to derive any Díní benefit, but make a point of being seen in the company of the sheikh, trying to impress others as being close to the sheikh. All for material benefit.

Two qissas related to Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán

Something else along the same lines comes to mind:

Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán's name had cropped up in discussion. Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه then commented: "People are strange. When some fault of a person is noticed, all the good in him is ignored. All the good gets washed down the drain. One should not do this. One should bear in mind the good in him also. One should not have both eyes closed, but keep one eye open at least. Do not totally condemn a person because of his worldliness. A dunyádár may have qualities of tolerance and benevolence, constancy and faithfulness, to a degree not found in the díndár."

Sayyid Ahmed Khán was his actual name. The "Sir" in front was attached when the English conferred a knighthood on him. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán had a reputation for being a worldly person. He had some fine qualities and he was a well-wisher of the Muslim community. However, this concern of his was like that of "an immature friend." This concise description was given by Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه who then continued: "But some qualities in him deserve to be praised." Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه then went onto relate two incidents.

Before continuing, let me ask you to give these incidents some thought. Use your sense of judgement. These are all matters concerned with isláh. These incidents were not meant as entertainment – Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه khánqáh was no cinema for entertainment. Every talk had some message, some lesson of a unique nature. The whole object of relating qissas is to take a lesson. The Hadíth Sharíf states:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَحْيِنِيْ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّ اَمِتْنِيْ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّاحْشُرْنِيْ فِيْ زُمْرَةِ الْمَسَاكِيْنِ

O Alláh! Keep me alive in a state of miskín. O Alláh! Grant me death in a state of miskín. And, O Alláh! Raise me up (in the hereafter) in the group of misákín.

The Qur'án Sharíf has numerous qissas concerning the kuffár and

mushrikín, the ahle-kitáb (Nasárá and Yahúd) and the munáfiqín. The purpose is to teach a lesson: These were people who had the truth explained to them time and again, but they refused to take heed. Just see how they were dealt with. So, O Muslims, save yourselves from a similar fate. See that you do not behave like them, for Alláh Ta'álá's system is such that eventually His punishment descends on the disobedient. Take note that the punishment of Alláh Ta'álá is severe. Do not be fooled into thinking that the respite granted while sins are being committed is a sign of condonation. No! It is Alláh Ta'álá's system to give respite initially, before His wrath descends. On the other hand, look at the sincere sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم: Because of their good deeds they were treated differently. On occasions they were assisted by malá'ikah and their hearts were strengthened with divine inspiration (ilhám), so that they remained steadfast at times of trials and tribulations.

There are lessons in these. Fortunate is that person who can derive lessons from others: to be able to see how the good were dealt with and thereby try to improve; and to be able to see the way in which evil doers were punished and thereby abstain from evil.

Let us now go the qissas related by Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه:

The first qissah: person posing as his son-in-law

A person applied for a post to the governor. This was during the time of British rule. In his application, the person falsely stated that he was the son-in-law of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán. He was told to present himself for an interview on a certain day. In the meantime, the English governor sent a wire to Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán wanting to know if the applicant was really his son-in-law.

Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán realised that it was some impostor, but replied: "Yes, he is my son-in-law." The governor, having established the applicant's relationship to one so well known to the British, gave him an excellent post.

During his leave this impostor son-in-law arrived at the residence of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán had never seen him before and, therefore, did not recognise him. "Who are you?" The impostor

replied: “I am that liar who passed himself off as your son-in-law in order to obtain a post with the governor.” Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán said: “That is no problem. Now, what I cannot do is get you married to my daughter to make you my actual son-in-law. You are already married. Yes, what I can do is adopt your wife as my daughter as from today. So now you are, in reality, my son-in-law.”

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه told us that, as long as he lived, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán treated this adopted daughter as his own. Whenever he called his other daughters home he called her too. She and her husband received the same consideration that his own daughters and their husbands received.

“He was a dunyádár,” Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه commented. “But see how faithfully he kept up this relationship. Such faithfulness is rarely found even among those who are díndár.”

It is no easy task to maintain a relationship in a faithful manner – what is called “nibháhná”. Young people do not observe this relationship in showing respect to their fathers; and muríds do not observe this relationship in its correct context with their sheikhs. One finds that it does not take much for a person to feel offended and the next thing is that he leaves everything and off he goes.

The second qissah: Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán and the beggar

This qissah is also worth listening to carefully and pondering over.

It is a hot summer’s day. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán is lying relaxed on a couch in his room. A visiting friend from Hyderabad is lying Similarly, relaxed on another couch nearby. Sweet-scented grass screens hang on one side: a servant stands on the other side of the screens and sprinkles water onto them from time to time, while tugging on the strings of ceiling fans, keeping them in constant motion, causing a cool breeze to pass through the room. The glass doors to the room are closed. In line with the doors, a short distance away, is a well.

A beggar comes along, stops at the well and lays down his bundle. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán observes the arrival of the beggar. Being quick witted, he sums up the situation and remarks to his friend: “Just watch. This beggar is going to change his clothes and pose as a durwesh and come to us. But

I will not give him a single paisah!"

Just as Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán has predicted, the beggar takes out another set of clothes from his bundle, takes off the garments he is wearing and dresses himself as a durwesh. He walks to the door of the room and knocks loudly and confidently. Such people are not the timid type! Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán, true to his word, ignores the knock. However, such beggars cannot take a hint. The knocking becomes more vigorous and persistent, as if it is a matter of life and death.

Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán is flustered. Reluctantly, he orders the servant to open the door and allow the "durwesh" in. The "durwesh" enters, makes salám, calmly seats himself on a vacant couch and starts speaking to Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán.

However, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán, after giving a very cursory reply to the salám, pays him no further attention. Seeing this indifference, the voice of the "durwesh" suddenly becomes sharp and high pitched. "Do you not recognise who I am? I am that person who has had the honour of visiting such and such!" The person whose name he takes – he must have picked it up somewhere – was none other than the pír of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán.

Do not be surprised. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán is well known as a dunyádár, but he was also díndár. He used to be punctual with his five times namáz with jamá'at; he kept a beard strictly according to the Sharí'ah; he used to recite the Qur'án Sharíf regularly; and he was punctual with his Tahajjud namáz. Admittedly, he held controversial views on some points of 'aqá'id.

To continue: The "durwesh" is saying. "Yes, I visited him. These eyes of mine have been blessed by gazing at his gracious countenance." A change comes over Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán. He is immediately attentive and sits up respectfully. He apologises: "Please forgive me. I did not recognise you." He turns to the servant and says: "Bring me my cash box."

The servant brings a small box which he places in front of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán, who takes from the box a handful of silver coins. He gets up and walks over to the "durwesh" and respectfully hands him the money. "Huzúr, please be kind enough to accept this gift." The "durwesh" takes the money – after all, this was the purpose of his visit – and departs.

Watching all this bemusedly is the V.I.P. from Hyderabad. Important

people have important people as friends. They do not take friends from the riffraff.

He comments: “What happened? You said you would not give him a single paisah and there you went and gave him a small fortune.” He is obviously unaware of the reason for the change in Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán’s attitude. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán asks: “Did you not hear the name he mentioned?” The friend says. “Yes, I heard.” Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán explains: “Well, that happens to be my Pír-Sáhib. When he said that he had set eyes on my Pír-Sáhib how could I ignore him? I was duty-bound to be respectful and present him something. In any case, I got away cheaply.” The friend says: “Got away cheaply? But I saw you gave him quite a big sum.” Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán says: “I swear that had he said that I should give him the entire box I would have done so! No. I got away cheaply.”

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه concluded his narration by saying: “See! These were the qualities to be seen in the dunyádár in those days. Think. Do those who are díndár possess such qualities?”

Let us now summarise our discussion on hypocrites:

Firstly: Hypocrisy in the time of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was in beliefs (i’tiqád). Hypocrisy nowadays is in deeds and actions (a’mál).

Secondly: Just as i’tiqádí hypocrites presented themselves in the company of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم one will find amalí hypocrites in the company of a walí.

Thirdly: Due consideration was given to those hypocrites then, so too, will these hypocrites be treated with due regard now and even more so.

Praise and censure should be equal

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه used to say: “Do not place any faith in any person’s devotion to you; and do not feel offended at any person’s censure. In this age, praise and censure should be equal in your eyes.” This was said in an age when there was still some degree of sincerity in people.

What type of buzurg is he who gets elated when he is praised and feels now he is somebody? And when he is censured, he is offended. He stops speaking with the one who has criticised him and avoids meeting him. What type of pious person is he? What type of buzurg is he? What type of

Tahajjud-guzár is he? When he is praised, he becomes conceited and when he is censured, he nurtures hatred and malice in his heart!

In this day and age, a person will praise you to the skies as long as he can make use of you. The day he finds he cannot manipulate you, he starts castigating you, speaking ill of you. Now, tell me: what value would you set on such praise or such criticism?

The following comments of Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه appear very appropriate. At the time I was alone with Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه. On many such occasions, with nobody else present, Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه would come forth with breathtaking pearls of wisdom.

"I wish to say something," Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه said. "Yes, Hadhrat." "See here: In this day and age no person is loyal and faithful (mu'taqid) to anyone else, except a few, má-shá-Alláh." Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه tone and expression was something special. "Each person is a devotee of his own self. As long as you pander to others, agreeing with their whims, talking softly and sweetly, people will express their devotion to you. The moment you say: 'No. No,' and people cannot make use of you, both affection and devotion vanish – muhabbat is gone and so is i'tiqád." And this has been borne out by experience!

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه then continued: "The thought that people will not speak ill of one is a delusion. Dear brother, if people spoke ill of a nabí, why would people not speak ill of a walí? And if there is nobody speaking ill of that person, then he is not a walí. It is impossible that a nabí should have people speaking ill of him, but a walí should have none to speak ill of him."

Qissah of the laundí and Baqíbilláh رحمة الله عليه

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه narrated a qissah to illustrate this point:

This incident occurred in the age when female slaves – strictly according to the Sharí'ah – still existed. A person owning a female slave (laundí) had fallen into hard times. He told the laundí: "You see my condition – I have been reduced to poverty and there is hardly anything to eat. I do not see why you should suffer with me. I have decided rather to sell you." She said: "Whatever makes you happy. I don't have any complaints. However, I do

have a request to make." "What is it?" "If you do decide to sell me, sell me to anybody except Baqíbilláh!"

Who was Baqíbilláh رحمة الله عليه? He was a very great buzurg, a walí of great fame, the sheikh of none other than the famous Mujaddid Alfe-Thání رحمة الله عليه of Sarhind Sharíf, in the Naqshbandí silsilah. Baqíbilláh رحمة الله عليه resided in Delhi, where he also lies buried.

The owner was surprised at this request of his laundí. "Why ever not?" The laundí explained: "I have had occasion to go into Delhi for some work on a number of occasions. Wherever I have gone, I have heard nothing, but praise of Baqíbilláh. Nowhere have I heard anybody say anything bad about him. I, therefore, have my doubts as to his being a real walí. That people should speak ill of a nabí, but not of a walí is completely unheard of! What kind of walí is that?"

Her owner said: "Baqíbilláh is the very person I am going to sell you to. But, to please you, I will request three days' grace, during which I will have the option of taking you back. You remain with him for three days and see for yourself what type of person he is. I will tell him that I reserve the right to take you back within three days. If I do not, you will remain with him."

Three days' grace in a transaction is called "Bay-Khiyáre-shart" in the Sharí'ah.

The arrangement satisfied the laundí. The owner subsequently sold her to Baqíbilláh رحمة الله عليه – with the three days' option – and left the laundí at his house.

Mealtime came. Baqíbilláh Sáhib رحمة الله عليه told the newly acquired laundí: "O Alláh-kí-bandí, it is time for meals. Go and fetch a light for the fire."

It was before the age of matches. Fires were lighted from burning embers obtained from the neighbourhood. The laundí went to the next-door neighbour and requested a light from the lady of the house. The neighbour told her to go ahead and help herself, and the laundí took some burning embers from the fire. As she was leaving, the neighbour asked: "For whom are you taking the light?" "For Baqíbilláh Sáhib," the laundí replied.

That was enough! The name of Baqíbilláh Sáhib رحمة الله عليه was enough to set off a torrent of vituperation from the neighbour. Swearing and cursing

Baqíbilláh Sáhib رحمة الله عليه the woman forced the laundí to return the burning embers and chased her out. The laundí returned, very upset... and empty handed.

Baqíbilláh Sáhib رحمة الله عليه asked: "Did you not bring a light for the fire?" The laundí mumbled something. "No. No. Give me a full explanation," Baqíbilláh رحمة الله عليه insisted. The laundí then explained how she had gone to the neighbour and got permission to take some embers. When asked for whom, she had said it was for him, then the swearing and cursing followed and she was finally chased out empty handed.

"Ofo!" Baqíbilláh Sáhib رحمة الله عليه remarked when she had finished: "Never mind Delhi, but we have people just over the wall calling us evil names!" The laundí understood immediately. She had been given the answer to the doubts she had expressed to her previous owner.

Before three days had passed, the previous owner arrived to find out whether she wished to stay or not. The laundí said: "I wish to stay. I have discovered that he is a real walí: I have found that he has a neighbour who speaks ill of him."

The laundí in this qissah is underlining the point made: If a nabí has people talking ill of him, then a walí, one who walks in the footsteps of a nabí, will surely have people talking ill of him as well. It is essential that one's gaze should be neither on praise nor on censure. One should have a clear mind, a mind free of all expectations from others.

A walí will not get swollen headed with praise and he is not offended by censure. Why? The reason is that the gaze of a walí has shifted from the creation and is focussed on the Creator. If an individual has not reached this stage, he will get conceited with praise and he will take offence at censure. This is a clear indication that his gaze is focussed on the creation and not on the Creator.

O sálik, do you understand?

One's concern should be neither with praise nor with censure, whether one is in one's home or outside; whether praise or censure emanates from those close to you or from outsiders – more so if it comes from those close to you. From time to time you are bound to have dealings with relatives and others close to you. You are bound to face both pleasant and unpleasant

situations. Should you get upset at some bitter experience, then you are no walí. It is pure foolishness to expect praise and respect from relatives and those close to you – just as foolish as not to expect problems and censure from them. Expect more criticism from them. Relatives and those close to you tend to be very touchy. You shower them with kindness and favours, they are happy with you; you do not give them anything and they are upset with you. This attitude is only rarely encountered from outsiders. That is why Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه said: "To be desirous of that honour, respect and attention from relatives and those close to you that others show, is a sure sign of takabbur in that walí."

This does not mean that relatives and those close to one are necessarily rude and disrespectful. What it means is: do not be desirous of the same attitude of respect and honour from relatives and those close to you that others may display towards you. Should relatives and those close to you treat you with the same high regard, well and good. But from your side, see that you are not desirous of such respect and honour.

It may happen that an elderly person may honour a young sáleh person. He may stand up in respect, even take his hand and kiss it respectfully. However, should this young man expect his father and grandfather also to stand up for him when he meets them? Obviously not. Do not even turn your thoughts in that direction. It is a different matter if they, on their own, show respect.

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه related the following: Mauláná Qásim Sahib's رحمة الله عليه father was a landowner. He used to smoke a huqqah and get the young Mauláná Qásim Sáhib رحمة الله عليه to prepare it for him. A buzurg happened to be passing by one day and he saw Mauláná Qásim Sáhib رحمة الله عليه busy with the routine of preparing the huqqah and presenting it to his father. The buzurg took the father to one side and advised him softly: "Be kind enough not to let your son prepare your huqqah. That action causes the Arsh to shake. Kindly refrain him from it."

The father heeded the advice and, thereafter, never asked Mauláná Qásim Sáhib رحمة الله عليه to prepare his huqqah again.

One does find parents who recognise the goodness and piety in their children and respect them accordingly. But one should not be desirous

of such respect. Such a desire is a fault in wiláyet and should not be present.

Do not expect praise from wives

Among those related and close to one, that person who is closest and has the highest degree of intimacy is one's wife. On the basis of what has been said, how can one be desirous of praise from her and how can one expect to escape censure from her? So, in accordance with the rule that one should neither anticipate any praise from those close to one nor expect to escape from their censure, this rule will be applicable to the highest degree when it comes to the wife.

A wife is most unpredictable. A parent or a child, both of whom are closely related, will draw a line in their attitude and behaviour. But a wife draws no lines. She has no regard for any etiquette. Therefore, no matter what her attitude, no matter what words she utters, no matter what unbecoming language she uses, do not take offence. On the other hand, if she praises you to the skies, it is nothing to get excited over.

Are you married? No? Never mind. Just listen carefully first before you do get married.

[Hadhratjí directed this question at a young man sitting in the majlis.]

Praise and censure should be equal in your eyes to an even greater extent where the wife is concerned. Neither her praise nor her censure carries any weight. Do not feel you are in a unique situation if you are hen-pecked. If one looks at the auliyá-Alláh, most of them were in such situations. There were exceptions, but most had wives who called their walí-husbands harsh and offensive names and openly expressed their displeasure with their walí-husbands. However, at no stage did any walí feel upset at the wife's displeasure.

You must be aware of the Hadíth Sharíf that states that a woman has an intelligence ('aql) which is defective.

هُنَّ نَاقِصَاتٌ فِي الْعَقْلِ وَالدِّيْنِ

They are deficient in intelligence and in Dín.

It follows that a defective intelligence will spout out anything without any insight into its correctness. You students may have studied and learnt this Hadíth Sharíf. You are convinced of its truth – you have ’ilme-yaqín. But that is as far as you have progressed. Why do I say that? Because, sooner or later, you are going to show tremendous displeasure at some incident. This is because the knowledge that you have acquired is at an academic level only and not at the level of wiláyet. Mere academic knowledge is of temporary value. Only that knowledge assimilated at the level of wiláyet will be of permanent value.

The walí has a deeper understanding. He knows what difficulties some Ambiyá had experienced at the hands of their wives. He knows how much vexation our Nabí صلى الله عليه وسلم had undergone by the doings of some of his wives. Therefore, the walí realises his own responsibility of faithfully maintaining his relationship with his wife – what we have termed “nibháhná.” There are numerous incidents from the lives of the auliyá-Alláh one can quote.

Qissah of Abúl-Hasan Núrí and his wife

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه mentioned an episode concerning Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه His original name was just Abúl-Hasan. The “Núrí” was added on afterwards. Very often people become known by a name connected with some special feature in their lives. So also with Abúl-Hasan رحمة الله عليه. It was noticed that when he used to speak a núr used to emanate from his mouth. He thus came to be known as Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه Another buzurg who also came to be well known by a nickname is ’Abdul Karím رحمة الله عليه. He lived during the Sultanate period. Differences with the Sultán caused him to spend most of his time in jail. He thus became known as ’Abdul Karím Jailí رحمة الله عليه. There is an episode concerning him during his stay in jail that is worth mentioning because of the lesson in it:

These buzurgs used to keep with them two sets of garments, one set being worn and one other spare set.

Reality of zuhd (asceticism)

Clothes: Let me just stop a while to point out that owning more than

one set of clothes is not against the concept of zuhd – you may possess two, four, eight or ten sets of clothes. If Alláh Ta'álá has blessed you with wealth, you may sew for yourself 10 sets of clothes even and it would not be against the concept of zuhd. The proviso being that you do not put yourself in debt.

It must also be pointed out that to live in ease and comfort at the cost of causing suffering to your wife and children is definitely against the concept of zuhd and wiláyet. There is no question that this latter situation can be one of asceticism or saintliness.

Residence: Having a double storey or even a six storey mansion is also not against the concept of zuhd and wiláyet. Even if a person owns 10 houses, it is still not against the concept of zuhd. The proviso again being that you do not have to ask from others, but that Alláh Ta'álá has blessed you with such wealth. Remember:

اَلسُّؤَالُ ذِلٌّ – *To ask (beg) is degrading.*

Let us take an example: Somebody has four sons. How are all going to stay in one house as the sons grow up and get married? If Alláh Ta'álá has blessed you with wealth, then provide each one with his own house.

Whenever some muríd wrote to Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه complaining of friction between the wife and the in-laws in a situation where everybody was staying together in one house, Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه used to write back: "As soon as possible go and stay on your own, whether by renting a house or building your own. Do not stay together."

A Fársí saying goes as follows:

Do not make your home in other peoples' homes.

How can several families stay together, using one entrance, one kitchen, one lounge and bumping into one another day and night? No. Each one's quarters should be separate. If you have four sons and Alláh Ta'álá has blessed you with wealth, provide each son with his own house. You may have only one piece of land. In that case divide the property, making sure that each son has his own quarters – the kitchen and the cooking should be separate, the allowances should be separate and the food stock should also be kept separate. Do not share from one kitty and one stock room, but

divide each one's share and allocate to the respective persons.

You may be wondering what all this has to do with isláh. Be assured that these are matters very important in one's isláh. An important principle in isláh is that one's mind should be free from unnecessary disputes and worries. The individual should be in a tranquil state. He should not be flustered. His thoughts should not be scattered, but be collected. Taking steps to prevent problems from arising leads to tranquillity. If there is no peace of mind, the person's tiláwat and his namáz are recited with a troubled mind. The person's sleep is restless. He cannot concentrate on his work. A mind in turmoil is the very antithesis of building up a connection with Alláh Ta'álá.

Food: If Alláh Ta'álá has blessed you with wealth, eat good nutritious food of high quality. To eat well is also not against the concept of zuhd.

Do we have any proof for making these statements? Yes, we have. What has been said is not against the sunnah of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had more than one set of clothes, more than one topí and more than one pair of shoes. Where the principle is established that it is not against the sunnah to have more than one of an item, then the quantity beyond one will vary with each individual.

For example: Several people have come to visit you. You place some fruit, for example, mangoes, in front of them to eat. You possess only one knife. Now each guest, of necessity, must await his turn to cut his mango. Is this not bringing on an artificial difficulty? You should have several knives so that your guests are not put to inconvenience. Similarly, you should possess several spoons, plates, tumblers, and so forth, to be able to attend to your guests with ease.

What about food? You should be familiar with Shamá'il Tirmidhí Sharíf – a Hadíth kitáb on the lifestyle of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Therein is a description of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم having eaten chicken, confirming that it is not against zuhd to eat well.

The Hadíth Sharíf also describes how Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم once wore a fine quality Yemeni shawl of extreme beauty.

We have established that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم ate well and dressed well, just as he is known to have eaten simply and dressed simply. Both ways

were adopted with due consideration for the ummat. In this diversity lies the isláh of the ummat: If the well-to-do adopt a high standard of living, the poor should not complain and they should not consider the rich to be arrogant. On the other hand, the rich should not be contemptuous of the simple food and attire of the poor. We can see the great wisdom behind adopting the lifestyles of the poor and the rich.

However, when it came to personal preference, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم chose simplicity for himself. Alláh Ta'álá offered to turn Mount Uhud into gold, but Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم preferred a life where he had something to eat at one mealtime and nothing the next.

Let us reiterate: to eat well, to dress well and to possess more than one of an item, is not against the concept of zuhd. Bear in mind:

اِنَّمَاالْاَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

Deeds and actions are dependent on intentions.

Ikhtiyárí and ghair-ikhtiyárí – qissah of 'Abdul Karím Jailí

After this digression, let us go back to our qissas. We had started off with Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه and then we had started to speak of 'Abdul Karím Jailí رحمة الله عليه. To continue: 'Abdul Karím Jailí رحمة الله عليه had two sets of garments. When Friday came he had a bath and washed his clothes. After zawál he put on his clean clothes and proceeded towards the jail gates with the intention of going for Jumu'ah namáz in town.

Jumu'ah namáz inside a jail is not permissible. One of the conditions for the validity of Jumu'ah namáz is that the site where Jumu'ah namáz is to be performed should be accessible to all members of the community. Obviously, this condition cannot be fulfilled in a prison.

When 'Abdul Karím Jailí رحمة الله عليه reached the gates, he turned around and walked back. The warders were not going to oblige by opening the gates for him and, it is obvious, that he could not walk through the gates. Friday after Friday he went through the same routine. Some fellow prisoners noticed this and said: "Hadhrat, why do you take all this trouble? Every Friday we see you wash your clothes, have a bath, dress neatly and then proceed in

the direction of the town for Jumu'ah namáz, knowing full well that you will not be able to go beyond the gates. What is the necessity? Why do it?"

'Abdul Karím Jailí رحمة الله عليه replied –and herein is the lesson: "As far as it is in my power to make an effort for Jumu'ah namáz why should I not do it? What is within my power and choice (ikhtiyár) – that much I can do, prepare and proceed as far as the gates. What is beyond my power and choice (ghair-ikhtiyárí) – to proceed farther, I am helpless and I return."

Do you see the lesson?

When a person, by his own ikhtiyár and determination (irádah), can make an effort to do some good, laziness is no excuse. What is beyond his power and choice (ghair-ikhtiyárí) he should not pursue. There should be no hankering after what is ghair-ikhtiyárí – there should be no wasted effort to attain it. It is beyond one's power and choice.

To put it another way: Constant a'mál at the level of maqáme-ihsán are ikhtiyárí – it is within the power and choice of an individual to consistently perform deeds at that level where he is aware that Alláh Ta'álá is watching him. On the other hand, certain states are ghair-ikhtiyárí, namely that kaifiyát should come and that háláte-ajíbah should manifest – it is not in the individual's power or choice to bring on emotional states and moods and to produce states of a wondrous and ecstatic nature. Why concern oneself with what is beyond one's power and choice? Why be desirous of such states? Why strive for them? Why be grieved at not being able to acquire them? Why be saddened if they vanish, should they have manifested?

Understanding zikr and kaifiyát

It is important to understand the above. An improper understanding can cause the following situation:

An individual complained to me: "I cannot achieve a state of tearfulness. But I saw a person sitting in front of me making zikr in such a way that the tears were just flowing from his eyes." This individual is now upset and dejected. He does not understand that crying is not ikhtiyárí, but is ghair-ikhtiyárí. If it comes, well and good; if not then there is no reason to long for it. Should you have the misconception that these states (kaifiyát) are objectives to be pursued, then you are leading yourself into problems. You

are going to become disillusioned with Sulúk. As a result you are going to cease your zikr because you now feel – quite wrongly – that your zikr is not producing any results.

Such misconceptions make the individual a prey for Shaitán. ’Abdul-Azíz Dabbárرحمة الله عليه relates an incident:

The zákirín were busy making zikr in the khánqáh of their sheikh. This is expected of those staying in the khánqáh, that they should be punctual with their Tahajjud namáz and zikr. What type of tálib and sálik is he who stays in the khánqáh, but does not get up for Tahajjud and does not make zikr? He has come to the khánqáh for these. He has freed himself from his worldly worries, he has left his business and he has left his family, so now he has the free time for these. One is surprised that he is still not punctual with his Tahajjud and that he is not persistent in his programme of zikr. Just what type of sálik is he? No! The Tahajjud and zikr are compulsory schedules while in the khánqáh. Otherwise, why come to the khánqáh? To be lazy in these matters is a sign of disrespect. Illness and/ or extreme physical weakness are valid excuses, but, otherwise, there is absolutely no reason for not getting up for Tahajjud and not making zikr.

’Abdul-Azíz Dabbárرحمة الله عليه, as we said, narrated that the zákirín were busy making zikr in the khánqáh. While making zikr one of the zákirín started crying. The sheikh noticed this and said: “Shaitán has arrived! The zákir is crying – Shaitán has caught hold of his little finger.” The crying of the zákir increased. The sheikh said: “Oho! Shaitán has started to overpower him!” The crying of the zákir increased still further and went on for a long time. The sheikh said: “Oho! He is now completely in the power of Shaitán!”

This incident is related by the great buzurg ’Abdul-Azíz Dabbár رحمة الله عليه in a kitáb recently translated from the Arabic. The kitáb is called “*Talbíse-Iblís*” (“*The Deceptions of Iblís*”).

The comments of the sheikh appear strange. What is the reasoning behind his comments? Quite simple: Shaitán has stopped the zákir from his basic objective, which is to remember Alláh Ta’álá. Shaitán has successfully diverted his attention and has now directed him to the joy of crying. Shaitán has got him so involved in the delight of shedding tears that his objective of remembering Alláh Ta’álá has fallen by the wayside.

The lessons to be learnt:

- Do not run after kaifiyát.
- Do not concern yourself with the fluctuations of these states.
- Do not be deflected from your objective. Your objective is to connect yourself to your Creator and not to the creation.

These kaifiyát are, after all, part of creation.

To put it in technical terms: your duty is to be busy with shaghl-bá-Haqq and not shaghl-bá-khalq. Shaghl-bá-Haqq is part of the a'mále-ikhtiyáríah akhláqe-mahmúdah (volitional deeds from among the praiseworthy qualities). Your duty is not to pursue what is ghair-ikhtiyárí. Become indifferent to matters ghair-ikhtiyárí and maintain a mind that is tranquil and serene. This is exactly what 'Abdul Karím Jailí رحمة الله عليه did in obedience to the Qur'ánic áyet:

يَآيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا إِذَا نُوْدِيَ لِلصَّلٰوةِ مِنْ يَّوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلٰى ذِكْرِاللهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ

O you who believe, when the call to (congregational) prayer is made on a Friday then hurry unto the remembrance of Alláh... (S.62.9.)

He did what was in his power – to prepare for Jumu'ah and go as far as the prison gates. What was beyond his power – to cause the gates to open – he did not bother with.

Do you understand?

We started with one of our great auliyá-Alláh, Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه so let us go back to him. Before relating the main qissah connected with the theme "praise and censure" I wish to mention another incident related about him:

One day while in his house Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه suddenly cried out: "Offo! Offo! They have been killed! They have been killed!" His wife looked up in alarm. "What are you saying?" Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه had experienced an episode of kashf. He explained: "At a certain far off place some people have been killed." The wife said: "Sub-hán-Alláh! You know what happened at such a distant place, but are you aware that some thieves entered the house and what they did to your child? Of course not. Forget it. Don't come with your fancy stories."

That was just by the way. We have already mentioned that the surname "Núrí" came about because a núr used to emanate from his mouth at times when he spoke. The núr was not seen every time, but only now and then. An important mas'alah of Sulúk is to be deduced from this: At times, when no núr emanated from his mouth he did not feel that his zikr was now useless.

The point to remember is that the moment such a thought presents itself Shaitán is there to mislead one. These masá'il of Sulúk are very important. It is imperative to know them. Otherwise, one will not be able to defend oneself against the attacks of Shaitán who tries to overpower us and lead us away from haqíqat.

Still on the subject of núr: Pírání-Sáhibáh, Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه wife, related that she saw a núr rising up from Hadhratwálá's shahádat finger (index finger of the right hand). The núr rose upwards and spread itself towards the sky. This she witnessed shortly before his demise. The point I wish to make is that Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه had made zikr with his fingers his entire life, but this núr manifested itself only at that terminal stage of his life. This again underlines the points made above.

The incident related by Pírání-Sáhibáh comes as no surprise. Many years prior to this Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه had stated: "Alhamdulilláh! It is a blessing of Alláh Ta'álá.

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ۝

And mention the favour of your Lord. (S.93.11.)

"All the states that had been experienced by the earlier auliyá-Alláh have been experienced by me as well, except for one. I have never yet been in a state of engrossment and absorption (istighráq) like that experienced by Sháh 'Abdul-Haqq Ladholwí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. Though not essential, it would be nice to experience that state as well. There is no remorse, just a desire of the heart."

Sháh 'Abdul-Haqq Ladholwí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه is one of the auliyá-Alláh of our silsilah. He is well known for his states of engrossment and absorption in the remembrance of Alláh Ta'álá. His absorption was such that he was

forgetful of even some of the simplest daily routines.

In any event, this state of istighráq was also experienced by Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه during his terminal illness:

Muftí Jamíl Sáhib came to Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه room to administer some medicine. "Barè-Abbá," he called softly. Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه used to be addressed as Barè-Abbá. There was no response. Muftí Jamíl Sáhib called out in a louder voice: "Barè-Abbá!" Still no response. Now quite loudly, with his mouth close to the ear: "Barè-Abbá! Barè-Abbá!" Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه eyes opened. He said: "The attention of one who is occupied should not be diverted to oneself."

What was Hadhratwálá occupied with? Istighráq! Shaghl-bá-Haqq! Not everybody experiences the same states. States differ and individuals have their own unique experiences.

We have strayed somewhat from our topic of "praise and censure". Let us try again. The qissah we are about to relate about Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه also involves Bú-'Alí-Síná, a physician of great repute. Bú-'Alí-Síná felt he should meet this famous buzurg of his time, namely Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه. He thus undertook a journey to Abúl-Hasan Núrí's رحمة الله عليه town and arrived at his residence. He knocked on the door and the wife answered the knock.

"Who is it?" she asked. Bú-'Alí-Síná introduced himself. "What is it that you want?" she asked. Very respectfully he said: "I have come to visit Hadhrat Sheikh Abúl-Hasan Núrí."

That was the last thing he should have said! The wife immediately started a tirade against her own husband, censuring him in the harshest terms. The mildest quotable names she called him were: a crook, a thief and a robber. Bú-'Alí-Síná was quite bewildered.

Disappointed and regretful, he told himself: "It seems he is not what I thought him to be. I made a mistake in travelling all this way." He apologised and took his leave: "But," he thought to himself, "seeing I am here I may as well meet him." He enquired from some people about Abúl-Hasan Núrí's رحمة الله عليه whereabouts. They explained that he normally went into the woods to collect firewood which he would sell in the bazár. This is the manner in which he earned his livelihood.

Bú-'Alí-Síná proceeded to the woods. After walking quite a distance, he noticed a saintly looking person coming in his direction. What was amazing was that a lion was walking alongside him. Moreover, the lion was carrying a bundle of firewood! He realised immediately that this saintly person could be none other than Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه. Bú-'Alí-Síná slowed down his pace and then stopped completely out of fear of the lion.

Saláms were exchanged from a distance. Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه then said: "Bú-'Alí, are you afraid of the ion? He does not harm humans. You need not be afraid." Bú-'Alí-Síná was somewhat reassured and he approached nearer. "Hadhrat," he spoke deferentially. "I had gone initially to your house to visit you. Your wife answered my knock. She enquired what I wanted. I merely replied that I had come to visit Hadhrat. But she started saying such horrible and disrespectful things about you that it was most embarrassing to stand and listen." Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه offered an apology.

Bú-'Alí-Síná continued: "But there is a strange thing that puzzles me." Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه asked: "What is that?" Bú-'Alí-Síná said: "What I cannot understand is that your wife has the upper hand over you. Yet you have the upper hand over this fierce lion!"

Abúl-Hasan Núrí رحمة الله عليه said: "Arè miyán! If one is unable to bear the burden imposed on one by that ewe, how is this lion going to bear our burden? It is because we carry the burden of her attitude that this lion bears our burden!"

Are you listening, children?

Praise and censure. The wife calls him horrible names. There is absolutely no acknowledgement of his saintly status from her. Only the heart of a walí can bear such censure. A mu'min-walí, a walí in whom the demands of ímán has caused him to leave off all sin and caused him to adopt taqwá and humility, a walí whose tongue and heart are engaged in constant zikr (zikr lisání and qalbí) so that his gaze is on the Creator and not on the creation, only such a walí will have the capacity for such wisdom.

Remember the above well.

That person who does not have these qualities is no man, just a mere kitten – he is no "miyán," merely a "meow".

Only that person whose gaze has shifted away from the creation and is

now firmly fixed on the Creator treats praise and censure as being equal, irrespective of whether they come from his household or from outsiders. He is more tolerant to those close to him – censure rather than praise is to be expected more from them than from outsiders.

The one who is closest to him, the one who is labelled in the Hadíth Sharíf as having a "náqise-'aql" (a defective intellect), namely his wife, will be the cause of such trials more than anybody else. Any individual with a "náqise-'aql" is incapable of seeing the consequences of his or her actions. Just look at other situations as well to see the truth of this. So the wife is the same – she will use her tongue with great liberty, unaware of the consequences.

A walí is that person to whom praise and censure are equal. Praise does not make him conceited. Censure does not produce any malice (kínah). Conceit is a sign of kibr (arrogance). Both of these, kibr and kínah, are internal evils. A walí is pure of internal illnesses – he has neither kibr nor kínah – so that praise and censure are treated as equal impostors.

We had mentioned that Hají Imdádulláh Sáhib رحمة الله عليه was Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه sheikh. He was also the sheikh of Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه.

A muríd is expected to write regularly to his sheikh. No letter had been received by Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه from Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه for an unusually long period. Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه then took it upon himself to write to Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه: "A time has elapsed. No letter has been received concerning my dear friend's condition. No notification of your states (ahwál) has been forthcoming."

Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه wrote back: "Ahwál are for the sáhibe-ahwál. Of what significance is this servant's condition? Yes, one thing though: now praise and censure are equal to me,"

Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه wrote back: "Mubárak! Congratulations! My heart is happy. Tajallí-afálí has manifested itself."

The meaning of this will be explained in some future discourse, in-shá-Alláh. Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه was congratulating Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه on a great achievement.

In summary

A number of topics have been discussed today. We have seen how the i'tiqádí hypocrites were given due consideration in those days; and how the amalí hypocrites are also given due consideration today. Incidents showing Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه and the dunyádár, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán's attitudes to impostors have been related. Both showed exceptional qualities of loyalty and faithfulness (nibháhná).

Good qualities are not produced merely by the recitation of tasbíhs, but flow from one who is a true walí. An item is recognised by the effects it produces. The sheikh is constantly assessing how much and to what extent these effects manifest in the muríd. The sheikh does not look only at his namáz. Yes, in this era of our decline – these are days of our downward slide – the sheikh may content himself if some reach only a stage of performing namáz punctually and correctly. However, when a sheikh notices that a muríd is striving hard in Sulúk, the sheikh's attitude and treatment is accordingly different. The rare sight of a muríd making full effort during these days of degeneration gladdens the heart. Obviously such a muríd will be handled differently from one not so inclined.

Praise and censure have been discussed in detail: both should be equal in one's eyes. There should be no desire for praise; and censure should produce no ill feelings. A walí is not perturbed by either. A sufficient number of incidents have been related in this regard.

A qissah concerning 'Abdul Karím Jailí رحمة الله عليه has also been related to illustrate the role of effort in matters ikhtiyárí and ghair-ikhtiyárí. The topic of zuhd was also dealt with in-between. A perspective on zikr and kaifiyát was given. It was also stressed that a khánqáh is a place where one should be punctual with Tahajjud and zikr. A khánqáh is also a place where tranquillity descends. Therefore, there should be tranquillity and serenity of body and soul, of tongue and heart. Just as khushú' is essential for the perfection and acceptance of one's namáz, khushú' is the desired state out of namáz: khushú' should be constantly with us.

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم made a du'á:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ لَّا يَخْشَعُ

O Alláh! Verily, I seek refuge in You from a heart wherein there is no khushú'.

Du'á

May Alláh Ta'álá give us all the taufíq, with sidq and ikhlás, to spend our time properly, whether in the khánqáh, at home or outside.

BOOKLET NUMBER FOUR

Originally published Rajab 1412- January 1992

Revised March 2005 -Safar 1425

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Alhamdulilláh, this fourth booklet in this series has now been published through the barkat and du'ás of Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه.

It is exactly two years since the first booklet was published, and booklets two and three followed shortly thereafter. Those readers who have attempted to follow the guidance in these booklets would have made considerable progress during this period. It is hoped that this fourth booklet will also assist readers in their progress, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá.

In reading the discourses of Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه two points will have become quite obvious to the reader:

Firstly, that these discourses do not fall in the category of "casual reading", but require careful and concentrated reading. In other words, they require careful study.

Secondly, that there are certain technical terms that are used time and again. A knowledge and understanding of these terms lead to greater appreciation and enjoyment of the discourses.

There is a third point worth mentioning, a point which those who have been fortunate enough to actually sit in Hadhratjí's رحمة الله عليه majális will vouchsafe: The height of appreciation and enjoyment comes from listening with the correct frame of mind. Many have experienced such exultation as to verge on ecstasy when listening to Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه. This effect is not conveyed in these paraphrased translations, unfortunately. Nevertheless, the correct frame of mind is still essential to get the most out of these discourses.

A majlis held by a sheikh of Taríqat has some special features. It is appropriate to repeat some important points concerning a majlis:

۞ A majlis does not follow the pattern of a lecture. A lecture on a subject will have a systematic explanation of aspects of that subject. A majlis, on the other hand, is an informal talk. There may or may not be a theme around which the talk unfolds, and the topics discussed may change from minute to minute.

۞ The object of the talk is to provide answers to the problems faced by those attending the talk. How the sheikh provides the right answers is a discussion on its own!

۞ It obviously follows that those attending have come in search of answers leading to their self-rectification (isláh). As the answers may appear at any moment and may appear in an unexpected way, each and every sentence uttered by the sheikh has to be listened to with the greatest of concentration.

۞ The sheikh may punctuate his talk with a number of rhetoric questions, where the answers are quite obvious. The aim is to emphasise a certain point. This technique is used very skillfully by Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه

.۞ Another technique used by Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه is to speak in the first person when explaining an áyet. In the translation, these have been put in quotation marks, but it must not be thought that these are verbatim quotations from kitábs of tafsír.

Bearing all this in mind, the suggestion is made that the reader should read each paragraph as an entity on its own, as well as reading it as part of the general theme. Whenever a question appears, the reader should stop to ponder what point Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه is emphasising. And, at all times, the reader should be alert to the deficiency within himself that may need correction. Any points not quite clear should be clarified with an ’álim-e-Haqqání.

Heartfelt thanks to those who gave feedbacks and constructive suggestions. Gratitude is also expressed to those who assisted with the corrections and kitábat – Jazákumulláh-fí-dárein.

Dr.I.M.

[This discourse was delivered by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه *on Tuesday, the 25th of Ramadhán 1409, corresponding with the 2nd May 1989, in Jalálábád, India.]*

RUSHING HEADLONG

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَوَّلُهٗ رَحْمَةٌ وَاَوْسَطُهٗ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَاٰخِرَهٗ عِتْقٌ مِّنَ النَّارِ

The beginning of it is mercy, the middle of it is forgiveness and the ending of it is freedom from the fire of Jahannam. (Hadíth Sharíf)

This month of Ramadhán is a month of extra mercy, of special forgiveness, of bounteous hosting, of great calmness and of great blessings.

These special features of Ramadhán are derived by a subtle use of the word "Ra-ma-dh-á-n" as an acronym in the following manner:

Ra – ر – standing for *rahmat* (mercy).

Ma – م – standing for *maghfirat* (forgiveness).

Dh – ض – standing for *dhiyáfat* (hosting).

Alif – ا – standing for *ulfat* (affection)/ *unsiyat* (calmness).

Nún – ن – standing for *ne'mat* (blessings).

Alláh Ta'álá's *rahmat* and *maghfirat* are special in this month. *Dhiyáfat*: one is a guest of Alláh Ta'álá Who provides for His servant. *Ulfat* and *unsiyat*: affection between one another and with Alláh Ta'álá. If there was no serenity who would stay hungry the whole day and then still perform 20 rakats namáz of Taráwíh at night additionally? *Ne'mat:* blessings are to be seen everywhere. Just see what delicacies are placed before you at the time of breaking your fast.

Besides the food, there are blessings visible elsewhere – in one's 'ibádat and obedience: one's tiláwat, one's zikr, one's tasbíhát are all performed in abundance.

One sees the mu'min rising early for sehrí and then rushing to perform his Fajr namáz with jamá'at, eager to fulfil the rights of the Sharí'ah, the rights of Alláh Ta'álá. That Great Being, that infinite non-particular Omniscient

One, has seen this small, finite, particular human eagerly rushing forth to fulfil His edicts – such zeal for obedience! – and He has taken him into His lap! The Infinite Being now sacrifices for this finite devotee.

The pre-requisite, of course, is that this finite human is a devotee of that calibre. If so, then there is no reason why the Master should not be ready to sacrifice for His servant.

Qurbe-Iláhí – Closeness to Alláh; & a qissah of Ayyáz

You have all heard of King Mahmúd Ghaznaví and his slave Ayyáz. The devotion of Ayyáz to his master is legendary. In return for such dedication, King Mahmúd Ghaznaví was ready to sacrifice himself for his slave (if you only, but knew!) Ayyáz's devotion was such that he sacrificed himself at every command of the king. This was the basis for the king's reciprocal attitude. However, take note of the sequence: first comes dedication and sacrifice from the slave; then only will his turn come for the special mercy and sacrifice of the master. Of course, the purpose of sacrifice on the part of the slave is to attain qurb, otherwise it is deception. As the Qur'án Sharíf states:

فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا ۚ

Do not let this dunyá (worldly life) beguile you (S.31.33.)

This world has its distractions: pomp, lustre, adornments and beauties. It should not be that the orders of Alláh Ta'álá are directing you in one direction and you are sacrificing in the opposite direction.

Therefore, that human, that servant-slave of Alláh Ta'álá, should be ready to sacrifice to fulfil the orders of his Master. He should not give precedence to the orders of anybody else and, never, but never, act according to the orders of others in conflict with the orders of his Master. We are speaking of sacrifice of the servant-slave's inner being, his heart, his limbs and the rest of his body. Neither mentally, nor physically, nor financially should he sacrifice at anybody else's command. Sacrifice should only be for the orders of his Master.

Note that it is Alláh Ta'álá who has initially sought out His servant. Alláh

Ta'álá says. "I am near to you already..." The relevant Qur'ánic áyet is as follows:

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيْدِ ۝

We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (S.50.16.)

Alláh Ta'álá is saying: "I am near to you already, but you also show that you are near to Me. My nearness is an established fact. It is you who have distanced yourself from Me!" The servant-slave accepts this fact. "Then how can one get close?" In the following manner: "Any command that originates from Me should penetrate your heart in such a way that your whole body, each and every part of it, should succumb to that command and act accordingly."

From the broad spectrum of commands one set of commands concerns mu'ásharat also. That, in this world, social relationships, contact between one another, should be of ease and comfort, one of "ishrat" – "ishrat" being the root of the word "mu'ásharat".

It is taken for granted that the mu'min will have a pleasurable stay in Jannat in the hereafter. "But, no!" Alláh Ta'álá is saying. "Even in this world a pleasurable life, a life of ease and comfort, the life of a Jannatí, is specially reserved for the mu'min and not for anybody else!"

However, if the mu'min is running helter-skelter away from ímán, then there is no question of his enjoying that special lifestyle (and whatever it entails) of ease and comfort. Alláh Ta'álá has stated in the Qur'án Sharíf that this world is also meant for you, O mu'min. As for the hereafter, it is undoubtedly solely for you as well.

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللهِ الَّتِيْٓ أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهٖ وَالطَّيِّبٰتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۭ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ

Say thou: Who has forbidden the adornment which Alláh hath produced for His servants and the good things of His providing? Say thou: Such, on the Day of Resurrection, will be only for those who believed during the life of the world. (S.7.32.)

Whatever others are getting, whatever the ghair-mu'mins (non-believers)

are enjoying, is solely through the mediation of the mu'min. The mu'min is the original and real recipient of the bounties of Alláh Ta'álá and the ghair-Muslim is getting his bit through your intercession. The day you, O mu'min, cease to exist, your intercession will also cease. All the various ways and means that the ease and comfort were brought to you, will also cease. A full and complete life of ease and comfort was meant for you, O mu'min, because you sacrificed yourself at each and every command of Alláh Ta'álá. When you do not remain here anymore, the bounties will also disappear.

Alláh Ta'álá has stated that He is near to you already, but you are not near to Him. On hearing this, this human being is devastated. "What is it that I must do to get close?" he asks anxiously. Alláh Ta'álá says: "It is simply to obey My commands. When you obey My commands, your remoteness will be replaced by closeness (qurb). As stated, My qurb is there already. It is now in your ikhtiyár – you have the choice."

Concerning the commands of Alláh Ta'álá, a set of commands relate to mu'ásharat – social relationships. It is in relation to mu'ásharat that an áyet of the Qur'án Sharíf has come to mind:

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا – *(Show) kindness unto parents*

Háfiz – real and Ramadhání

I am not a háfiz. However, what should the reaction of a háfiz be when he hears these few phrases? A proper háfiz – not a "Ramadhání" háfiz, who is somebody else – a proper háfiz will immediately recite to himself what precedes and what follows these few phrases.

The reaction of an 'álim-háfiz is different. An 'álim-háfiz is one who is an 'álim as well as a háfiz. Instead of merely reciting the preceding and following sections, the meaning of these phrases also immediately run through his mind. He identifies and translates the áyet immediately and tells himself: "Áhá! This is what is meant." This is a real háfiz.

So, what is a "Ramadhání" háfiz? Well, he is somebody who waits for Ramadhán to approach and, in the preceding months of Rajab and Shábán, he hastily prepares himself to recite the Qur'án Sharíf in Ramadhán. He then sits back till the following Ramadhán. I am giving a lesson. There may

be a háfiz or two who have come here and, very daringly, are sitting here. So, listen carefully!

A háfiz who has the time and opportunity should recite at least one manzil (one-seventh) of the Qur'án Sharíf daily. If he cannot manage one manzil, he should recite at least two páras daily. This advice comes incidentally. Let us carry on with the áyet I had started reciting. Kindly complete it for me.

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَّبِذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ
وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا
فَخُوْرًا ۝

(Show) kindness unto parents and unto near kindred and orphans and the poor and unto the neighbour who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbour who is not of kin and the fellow traveller and the wayfarer and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess. Lo! Alláh does not love such as are proud and boastful... (S.4.36.)

Shukria: That is the way to recite.

[This comment was directed at the reciters of the áyet.]

Let us stop there. This morning, before the majlis commenced we saw how everybody rushed headlong to come and sit in the majliskhánah. This happens daily. Once, I commented. "What would people say at your mad rush to come in?" Some of you explained that the reason for the rush was that each person was trying to get a place right in front. Well, the intention is commendable. It is called tanáfus – that is, taking the lead in achieving something good to surpass others.

Assábiqún – Those in front. Qissah of the sahábí staying behind

Alláh Ta'álá says:

وَالسّٰبِقُوْنَ السّٰبِقُوْنَ ۚ أُولٰٓئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ۚ

And the foremost in the race, the foremost in the race: Those are they who will be brought near. (S.56.10/11.)

The intention in rushing in is that one should be in front and find a

place right in front. Which reminds me of the following incident which is worth pondering over.

Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم instructed a small group of four sahábah رضی اللہ تعالی عنهم: "Depart immediately for a certain place. As far as possible, try and reach there by this time." A time was specified.

Ponder on this. These instructions were vital, so let me repeat them: Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم ordered four sahábah رضی اللہ تعالی عنهم to depart immediately for a certain place. As far as possible they had to reach there by the time specified by Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم.

It was a Friday. The time for Jumu'ah namáz came and the namáz was performed by Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم. After the namáz, out of the four, one sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه presented himself before Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم to make salám and musáfahah before departing on his mission. Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم commented: "I had instructed four of you to depart. You are alone. What happened to the other three?" The sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه replied: "The other three had saddled their horses and had left at that time." "And you?" The sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه said: "I thought to myself that today is Friday and there is great virtue in attending the Jumu'ah namáz. Because of a tremendous desire to acquire the virtues attached to this namáz, I did not depart immediately. A further temptation was the blessing of performing namáz behind you. The intense desire to attain these cumulative virtues made me stay behind and not depart then."

Let us analyse his attitude: The sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه is saying that those deeds which are greater in virtue and blessings, logically, will be means of greater qurbe-Iláhí. That is, the degree of qurb is proportional to the degree of virtuous deeds performed. The virtues he was counting on were those of attending the Jumu'ah namáz and being led in the namáz by Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم. It was his aim to attain all these virtues and that is why he did not depart immediately with the others.

The sahábí رضی اللہ تعالی عنه continued his explanation: "I have a horse that is faster than those of my companions. I will now depart and easily catch up with them along the way and still reach our destination with them. In this way, I will have attained the virtues of Jumu'ah here, as well as carrying out your instruction to reach our destination at the time specified."

Do you understand the points the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه made? He wished to acquire the blessings of the Jumu'ah namáz, led by Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. as well as that of carrying out his earlier instruction.

Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم said: "Whatever you have said has its merits. However, you have not obeyed my instructions to the letter. Therefore, you have not acquired the qurb that the other three have acquired."

The lesson is "wassábiqúnas-sábiqún úlá-ekal-muqarrabún." Which is to say that the qurbe-Iláhí that the other three had attained by departing immediately, thus fulfilling the order of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم to the letter, this sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه had not attained.

What have you understood? O children, save yourselves – bach-cho, bacho! Safeguard yourself from merely fulfilling your desires. Merely giving expression to one's inner feelings is meaningless in relation to a specific instruction. These are points to turn over in one's mind, points to ponder over. On the surface, what a beautiful intellectual argument with proofs was presented by the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه: virtues of Jumu'ah, of performing namáz behind Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and, at the same time, the virtue of arriving at their destination in accordance with Rasúlulláh's صلی الله علیه وسلم instruction. Despite this, Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم said that he had not attained the qurb that his companions had attained by leaving immediately.

We can safely conclude: in the face of Nas, there is no value to ijtihád. In other words, in the face of explicit instructions from Alláh Ta'álá or His Rasúl صلی الله علیه وسلم, one's own deductions and conclusions are meaningless. This sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه had used ijtihád in the face of Nas, the specific instruction of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. to depart immediately.

No matter how many virtues are attached to a particular action and no matter how much qurb is attached to those virtues, these fade into insignificance in the face of obedience (ittibá'yet.) To repeat: ijtihád is meaningless in the face of Nas. It is apparent that ittibá'yet is basic. It is fundamental. Nothing is attained by mere expression of affection.

A further conclusion one can draw from this is:

In the face of a command by one's senior, one should not be self-opinionated. Of course, it goes without saying that the person who is one's senior or elder is accepted as such and not merely recognised as such. There

is a difference. A person acting on his own deductions and conclusions is merely gratifying his own desires. He is merely satisfying his own passions. He feels his progress lies in following his own viewpoint, that his line of action is good for him. In that case, how can one say he has accepted his senior as such? His verbal acknowledgment of his senior is meaningless. Accepting someone as one's senior and elder is to be obedient to him, provided that he is not commanding one to commit sins by disobeying Alláh Ta'álá's orders. Therefore, in the face of a command by one's senior, if one puts forward one's own deductions, one will only land oneself in unnecessary problems. Then, can one expect one's senior to come to one's assistance?

The sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه, on face value, had a good and perfectly logical intellectual argument. But it was contrary to Rasúlulláh's صلی الله علیه وسلم instruction. He was deprived of ittibá'yet. The final verdict of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم was that he had not attained the taqarrub-ilalláh which the other three had attained, even though they were deprived of attending the Jumu'ah namáz led by Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم.

To reiterate: the basis of qurb is ittibá'yet! This point is emphasised time and again in the Qur'án Sharíf:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say (to mankind O Muhammad,): If you love Alláh, follow me. (S.3.31.)

مَّنْ يُّطِعِ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللهَ ۚ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا

The one who has obeyed the Rasúl has obeyed Alláh and whoso turns away: We have not sent you as a protector. (S.4.80.)

يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا أَطِيْعُوا اللهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُوْنَ ۝

O you who believe! Obey Alláh and His messenger and turn not away from him when you hear him speak. (S.820.)

The crux of the matter is: do not intellectualise – do not put forward your own deductions and conclusions – in the face of an instruction from your senior and elder.

We had drifted to this topic when speaking of the headlong rush to sit

in the majliskhánah. Earlier on an áyet of the Qur'án Sharíf was recited wherein Alláh Ta'álá is instructing us about mu'ásharat. The root of the word "mu'ásharat" is "ishrat," which means gaiety/ pleasurable/ happy social life. We are thus to spend our life in this world in "aysh-o-ishrat" – in gaiety and happiness; in extreme ease and comfort; in peace and tranquillity with one another. Mu'ásharat is dependent on a compatible relationship; and relationships are dependent on acceptable behaviour from all sides. Each person should have such a relationship with the next person that there is nothing, but sheer joy and comfort. There should be no displeasure. Relationships should be full of ease – not disease! There should be no bitterness. One should avoid harshness in speech and action. One's words and the tone of one's voice should be such as to convey ease and comfort, otherwise the desired mu'ásharat is disrupted.

Kindness to parents

The áyet recited pertains to rushing headlong as well. We will come to that. The áyet, however, starts off with:

وَبالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا – *(Show) kindness unto parents.*

One's behaviour towards one's parents should be such that one does not incur their slightest displeasure. One should not allow unpleasantness to develop between them and oneself. That is how one should live with one's parents.

In the entire creation, after Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, of course, the status of the rights of one's parents as far as obedience is concerned, supercedes the rights of all others! Others do not enjoy the same rights. To this degree:

You are in the house making 'ibádat, performing nafl namáz or reciting the Qur'án Sharíf. Your father is ill. He calls you. Interrupt your 'ibádat, break your namáz and run to attend to him immediately.

To repeat: in the entire creation, the pre-eminence that the rights one's parents enjoy, no other creation's rights can match. This pre-eminence has been determined by Alláh Ta'álá. The status of one's mother and father is such that one's relationship with them should be of the utmost cordiality and kindness. One should not cause them the slightest harm, grief or upset.

Yet, what do we see?

۞ The son utters such words as to hurt them. This is harm caused to them emotionally.

۞ Their hard-earned money kept safely in the cupboard, is taken away quietly by the son. Their pockets are emptied. Harm caused to them materially. When the money is needed they find no money in their pockets and the box in the cupboard is also empty. Who has taken the money? Understandably, they are most upset and in a state of panic. The son has not only caused them financial loss, but also mental anguish.

Yes, you may find a parent who is an Alláh-wálá. His reaction is different. He remains unruffled. "Somebody or other must have taken the money. Let him be." His attitude is indifferent. He sees it from another angle: "Money is a perishable item. As far as needs are concerned the greater need will be in the hereafter! I forgive the poor fellow who took the money, for I will be adequately compensated for my loss in the hereafter. The greater dependence will occur then."

The Alláh-wálá does not have to think. This response is automatic. Those who are Alláh-wálá, the ahlulláh, do come across such situations. These are situations involving tarbiyet. It is in this light that the response of the ahlulláh is mentioned, so that you may be aware of it.

It has been written that once the ahlulláh have established a proper connection with Alláh Ta'álá, a true ta'alluq m'Alláh, then no matter what befalls them, they are not upset in the least. If an ahlulláh does get upset, it is a clear indication that he has not established that connection (ta'alluq) with Alláh Ta'álá which is the desired connection. Once an ahlulláh has established a proper ta'alluq with Alláh Ta'álá, there is absolutely no question of his getting upset! Feeling distressed is a condition of the mind and heart.

Toil and labour are connected with one's physical body, but being upset, being distressed, is a condition of the heart. A real ahlulláh, one who has established the proper connection with Alláh Ta'álá, will have absolutely no reason to be distressed within himself. This is one of the effects of ta'alluq m'Alláh. This is what differentiates him from one who does not have this ta'alluq. Otherwise, there would be no apparent difference between the two.

The four questions of Bábá Faríd Shakr Ganj رحمة الله عليه

This brings to mind Bábá Faríd Shakr Ganj رحمة الله عليه. As some of you may know, he was a great scholar and súfí. He was the khalífah of Hadhrat Qutbuddín Bakhtiyár Kákí رحمة الله عليه and went onto become a great sheikh himself.

Bábá Faríd Shakr Ganj رحمة الله عليه related the following in his majlis: "I have met some 600 auliyá-Alláh. I put a set of questions to all of them."

Note: A person has only one sheikh to whom he turns to for his isláh. However, one may meet other buzurgs as well. In that amazing era people undertook long journeys on foot. It was not unusual for them to meet several buzurgs from time to time during such journeys, but they were not given the status of one's sheikh.

The first question: Who is an áqil?

"The first question I set forth was: 'Who is an áqil (intelligent person)?' All 600 gave the same reply: 'An áqil is one who recognises his Áqá'. An intelligent person is one who recognises his Lord.

In worldly matters it is essential for a slave to know his master. If a slave does not recognise this simple fact, then how would he experience happiness in this world? This recognition is even more important when it comes to our Real Master. This recognition is called ma'rifat. All 600 auliyá-Alláh whom Bábá Faríd Shakr Ganj رحمة الله عليه questioned at various times, all separately gave the same reply. This consensus is called "ijmá' " and ijmá' is binding. So, the consensus of all 600 auliyá-Alláh was that an áqil, an intelligent person, is one who recognises his Áqá, his Lord and Master. In other words, an áqil is one who has ma'rifat.

Now, what is ma'rifat? Very briefly, without going into long explanations, ma'rifat is to recognise the different qualities of Alláh Ta'álá in detail and to act constantly and consistently according to this knowledge. A person endowed with ma'rifat will be called an árif-billáh. An áqil will thus be an árif-billáh.

However, nowadays a completely different meaning is given to the word áqil in everyday conversation. Every shrewdy, every trickster, every cheat, every fraud – any person who knows how to get his own over others – is

called an áqil, a clever person. "He is very clever," is what we hear about such persons. "He knows how to get his way." In modern terminology, the unintelligent are called intelligent; the mindless are said to be clever.

The real meaning of áqil has been stated above – an intelligent person is one who recognises his Lord and Master. The intelligence of the auliyá-Alláh is superior to that of any other group. The fact that 600 auliyá-Alláh testified to the above definition of an áqil shows an unsurpassable consensus of those who are really intelligent.

The second question: Who is called húshyár?

"The second question I put forward was the following," Baba Faríd Shakr Ganj رحمة الله عليه continued: " 'Who is called húshyár?' "

Seeing we have present here today some noted scholars, let me explain: "Húshyár" is an adjective derived from combining two Fársí words: "hush" and "yár". "Hush" means "sense/ consciousness." "Yáristán" means "to be of strength". Combining the two words we arrive at the following meaning; "One who has strength of mind; one who is sensible."

What was the reply to the question: "Who is húshyár?" "All 600 auliyá-Alláh gave the same reply: 'Húshyár is one who is not upset (pareshán) in any situation."

This answer is of great practical value. Is it not? After hearing this reply and bearing it in mind, we should look within ourselves and take stock. What is our state when matters go against our temperament? Day and night we face situations which we find unpleasant – we desire matters to proceed according to our wishes and just the opposite happens. What is our reaction?

The word "pareshán" is also Fársí, again a combination of two words: "Parídan," which means "to fly off"; and "shán," which means "state/ condition". "Pareshán" will thus mean: "his condition/ state has flown off." That is, he is not calm and serene. He is now disturbed and perturbed, anxious and frightened, ensnared, and so forth.

Alláh forbid! But should you find yourself in such a situation in the future, sit down and think for a while: "What is it that I heard in the majlis here? Why were these topics discussed in such detail, with illustrations and

anecdotes? What was my purpose in going to listen to these talks? So, why am I not acting according to the advice? Why am I not training my temperament accordingly? Why am I not drawing my temperament to a position of strength? Why this insipid and lacklustre condition? Why this dejection? Why am I not in control of my mood? Why can I not direct my thoughts more positively? Why am I testifying to my weakness? Why am I showing cowardice?" This is a detailed explanation of the term.

Do you understand or not?

A person in a position of responsibility especially will encounter such situations more than others. Here are a few situations:

A person has become a father, but does not know how to behave like a father. The moment a problem arises, the person becomes ruffled. This is sufficient proof that he is not húshyár. It is not written on his forehead, but it is obvious that he is not húshyár.

A person has become a principal. A particular problem arises. His condition is topsy-turvy. His temperament is out of control. He is anxious and perturbed. He is unable to think clearly. He cannot bear the upset. His inner grief is apparent to everybody.

These are important matters to bring to your attention, especially in this age, for the ahle-'ilm. Do these situations not occur? Are these challenges not forthcoming? A person in a position of responsibility should have an even temperament (mustaqil-mízáj) and a strong heart. He should be húshyár. He should be circumspect, taking into account all aspects of a situation: in front, behind, above, below and both sides.

Is the message getting through? Are these not important topics to discuss? If you had come here expecting me to ask: "How much muráqabah did you do today? What is your hál during muráqabah? How much zikr did you make? 3 000 or 10 000? So much! Well done!" If that is what you were expecting me to ask of you, I am sorry to disappoint you!

Dear mu'min, do not only build your ákhirat, but build your dunyá as well! This world is a reflection of Jannat for you, provided you live as you should be living. As for Jannat, it is already there for you.

These are topics we heard discussed by our Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Ashraf 'Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه. Why did he discuss them? Not for entertainment – it

was no cinema! These topics were discussed to direct and develop one's thinking along certain lines; to bring firmness in one's mind, to teach the appropriate mu'ásharatí lifestyle of ease and comfort, according to place and person.

The individual and especially one in a position of responsibility, should know how to act correctly in any particular situation. He should not just panic when confronted by an unexpected problem and blurt out. "No. No. I can't do it. This task is beyond me. Ask someone else to do it."

Sub-hán-Alláh! What courage! What bravery! He is easily ruffled. His composure is gone. He is uncontrolled. His facial expression has lost its equanimity. His words are hasty. He is openly portraying his fright.

Be húshyár! Do not be perturbed by any situation. This quality is connected with one's heart and mind. As stated already, toil and effort are connected with the physical body and is associated with physical tiredness. To be perturbed and panic-stricken, to feel crushed, are conditions of the heart. This person's body may be strong, but his heart is weak. I have seen great wrestlers with massive, sturdy physiques, getting frightened when confronted by one less massive and sturdy. As stated, fear and panic arise from the heart and not one's physique.

So, who is húshyár? One who panics? One who feels crushed? One who loses control of himself? No. Definitely not! Húshyár is one who is not perturbed by any situation. This is termed húshyár!

A boy showing húshyárí when facing an elephant

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه related an incident to us to illustrate this:

An elephant from the king's palace had suddenly become wild. It broke loose and was on a rampage, heading for the village. The local people were quickly informed and warned to stay indoors. The village shops were hurriedly closed. In next to no time the streets were empty.

However, incidentally, a young boy got left outside, and he was going in the direction that the rampaging elephant was coming from. The boy saw the elephant thundering towards him. What to do? A pup was lying nearby, unaware of the impending catastrophe. The boy acted quickly. He grabbed the pup by one of its legs, twirled the pup around his head for it to gain

momentum and then hurled it directly at the raging elephant. The startled pup hit the elephant on the face and started yelping loudly. The elephant became startled at this and came to a sudden halt. Its attention got diverted to the squealing, clawing pup on its trunk and the elephant actually started backing away. The elephant went away and the child got saved.

Hadhratwálá's comment was: "Look, he was only a boy, but he was húshyár!" He maintained his hosh. The stampeding elephant did not get him to panic. He did not lose his wits. His senses and composure were maintained and an excellent manoeuvre to stop the elephant came to mind to stop the elephant by striking it with a pup. A massive, raging elephant was repelled by a small quick-thinking boy making use of a little pup. A small, weak boy succeeded in a major task and the massive, strong elephant failed in its purpose of destroying the little boy. The elephant's hosh vanished, whereas the boy's hosh remained intact. The boy succeeded in a great task that of repelling the mighty elephant, whereas the elephant failed in something small, the destruction of a small child. Alláh Ta'álá had placed the strategy into the boy's mind whereby he got saved.

What do you understand? When one maintains one's composure and one does not allow one's senses to become disarrayed, the greatest task will be easily solved, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá. A special characteristic of being húshyár is the effect it has on one's thinking. Alláh Ta'álá has made it a feature of keeping cool and calm that a plan will come to mind appropriate to the situation, to bring success to one's affairs.

Try this exercise: think back. Try to visualise any such situation in the past where you were thrown into panic. Ask yourself: "Had I known then what I have learnt today would I still have been panic-stricken? Would I still have been restless and upset? Would I still have sat down uselessly, or crept into bed and hid under the blankets?" Your answer should be: "Of course not! Had I known then what I know today, I would not have got into such a state!"

I am trying to explain to you that there may be some of you sitting here who had to face such situations in the past and you should be thinking as I have just outlined. There may be others who may face such situations in the future – Alláh forbid! – in which case you should make use of these

talks and not become upset and panic-stricken.

Problems may arise from any direction: from one's wife or children, or from one's students, or one's servants or employees, or one's employer or superior. One's resolve should be to control one's temperament and gain the upper hand over one's thoughts by putting into practice what one has heard here today, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá. In this way, you will not allow yourself to be crushed or overwhelmed, or allow your serenity to be disturbed, or give an opportunity for others to mock you, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá.

We are still discussing Bábá Faríd Shakr Ganj's رحمة الله عليه second question "Who is húshyár?" All 600 gave the same reply: "One who is not pareshán in any situation." We are humans and we are bound to encounter difficulties. However, bearing in mind the measures to safeguard oneself and acting promptly on these, we will not go off the track. Or, if there is someone there to prompt one then, too, one will be assured of overcoming the difficulty. We are bound to come across problems.

Defeat turning to victory at the Battle of Uhud

I am reminded of the Battle of Uhud. Have you not studied this famous battle? Of course you have! Khálid Bin Walíd, who had not accepted Islám as yet, was in command of the Qurayshí cavalry. He was a great statesman and strategist and, in today's terms, commander-in-chief of the army. He saw a breach in the defences of the Muslims, grabbed the opportunity and attacked from behind, causing a severe setback to the Muslims. During the reversal, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was injured on the head and one tooth became shahíd. The ranks of the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم were in disarray. A loud cry went up from the enemy lines: "Qad máte Muhammadun." They announced that they had killed Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم.

You can now imagine the condition of the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم. Their success was turning into defeat. Many lives were being lost. Their ranks were in disarray as the enemy attacked from behind and from in front. And now this announcement! Their love for Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was such that this cry from the enemy shattered their very hearts! If Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was gone what was there left for them?

However, another cry also went up: "Look! Look! Here comes Rasúlulláh

صلى الله عليه وسلم!" The sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم turned around and saw Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم coming forward. On seeing him, the change in the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم was dramatic. Their despondency changed to jubilation. Their spirits were regained and their disarray turned to orderliness. They quickly grouped themselves around Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and attacked the enemy with regained fervour, driving the enemy back. Defeat turned to victory.

A temporary upset, a short-lived confusion, was replaced with sense and success on seeing Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. There were some among the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم who had kept calm and had said: "Even if Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم is martyred, Alláh Ta'álá is alive!" Alláh Ta'álá states:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُوْلٌ ۚ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ۚ أَفَائِنْ مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلٰىٓ أَعْقَابِكُمْ ؕ

Muhammad is but a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn back on your heels? (S.3.144)

If Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم were to pass away, will you leave your ímán and turn back? Alláh Ta'álá is alive. You have brought ímán for Him. There were Ambiyá before this and they also passed away.

The sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم were always calm and collected. This was how they were trained, to be húshyár. The disarray at the Battle of Uhud was short-lived. The depth of their grief was such that it caused a momentary lapse. A temporary weakness showed, but not of such a nature as to throw them completely off-balance. That moment passed and they were as before, calm and collected. There may be some students who may have had some doubts arising in their minds when reading about the Battle of Uhud. The above explanation should suffice to dispel those doubts.

To repeat: So, who is húshyár? Húshyár is one who is not perturbed by any situation. Do you understand? I keep on asking whether you understand, because these are lessons. This is a type of class being conducted for students. What students? Anyone seeking tarbiyet, anyone seeking his isláh, anyone desiring to develop courage and bravery, anyone seeking Islámic sturdiness.

The power of thought

These are prescriptions. Just as one finds medical prescriptions for bodily ailments, these are prescriptions for illnesses affecting the heart. These prescriptions are of great value, greater than any elixir of gamírah-gaza-ambr and mushk. These elixirs are undoubtedly of value, invigorating the body, but our prescriptions are greater in value. How is that? By causing one to conquer one's thoughts! Gamírah-gaza-ambr and mushk will cause the body to become strong. Our prescriptions will cause the heart to become strong. Combine the two and you have strength on strength. However, our prescriptions are of greater importance. Conquering one's thoughts is an amazing feat.

Qissah one: a personal experience

Here is a personal experience: In days gone by, I lived across the courtyard where Bháíján now stays. I used to sleep alone. Also, I used to travel alone, until I suffered a short illness. The doctors then stopped me from staying alone, travelling alone or even sleeping in a room by myself.

As I was saying, I was asleep when I felt as if something had bitten me. My eyes opened. I felt a tingling in my foot. A fearful suspicion (wehm) crossed my mind: Did a snake bite me?

Remember that wehm is a force in opposition to 'aql. These two forces are called qúwate-wehmiyá and qúwate-'aqliyá respectively. Should the force of doubt (qúwate-wehmiyá) progressively increase in a person, it becomes an illness which is very difficult to cure or control. Treating it is no easy task.

This thought that it could have been a snake that had bitten me, together with the tingling sensation in the foot, had an upsetting effect on me. I got up, opened the door and started climbing upstairs. Bháíján was staying upstairs. Having climbed up a few steps, I told myself: "What nonsense is this? Why disturb somebody for nothing, especially seeing he is asleep? Did you see a snake?" I climbed down and went back to bed. But then the same thought came back: "What if it were a snake?" I got up again, opened the door and started climbing up again. Again, I stopped and scolded myself. I retraced my steps and went back to bed.

This happened a few times. Then I took a grip on myself and told myself firmly: “It must have been a mouse. There are mice round and about. Nothing happens with a bite from a mouse.” I firmly held onto this thought and overpowered my other thought. The final result was that the burning and tingling in my foot disappeared and I slept soundly thereafter! With taufíq from Alláh Ta’álá and with the barkat of my sheikh, one thought had conquered another thought. We had heard such talks from our sheikh, just as you are hearing such talks today.

Thoughts have a very powerful influence on a person. A number of incidents spring to mind. You just keep on listening!

Qissah two: the farmer bitten by a snake

Hadhratwálá related the following.

It was ploughing season and a farmer had just finished ploughing his land. The ploughshare had gone loose and the farmer, carrying the plough on his head, took it to the blacksmith to be fixed. As he handed the plough over he commented: “I had this plough on my head and it felt as if something had bitten me. What could it have been? It must have been something or other.” He dismissed the matter from his mind. The blacksmith took the plough to his workshop. While in his workshop area, as he wiggled the loose ploughshare, he noticed a snake in one of the crevices. He quickly smothered the snake and killed it there and then and went onto fix the ploughshare. He made no mention of this to the farmer. The plough was fixed and handed back to the farmer who took it home.

The farmer was back the following year with the plough, the plough having become loose again. The blacksmith pulled the loose ploughshare out and the remains of the dead snake fell out. The farmer stepped back in fright and cried out: “Aah! What’s this? Where did it come from?” The blacksmith was a simple person and said innocently: “It’s a dead snake. This is the very thing that bit you last year.” “This snake bit me? A snake! A snake...” The farmer’s voice trailed off and he collapsed. He was carried home where he died shortly afterwards. You will note that, at the time of the snake-bite, he was not affected. A year later the overwhelming power of the thought of a snake-bite killed him.

What lessons were not taught to us by Hadhratwálá! He prepared his khuddám not only for the hereafter, but refined them for this world as well! Do not be hasty and come out half-baked. Alláh Ta'álá has created a potential force within yourself, which is the power of thought (qúwate-khiyáliyah). Take work from it and do not waste it. Use it properly, on the right occasions. Do not be infirm in your thinking (kachá), but be forceful (pakká).

Here is another qissah which we heard from the lips of Hadhratwálá:

Qissah three: the effect of Súrah Yásín

It was Ramadhán Sharíf and the Háfiz Sáhib was reciting the Qur'án Sharíf in Taráwíh. A certain simple-minded person was also attending the Taráwíh. He told the people that the day Súrah Yásín Sharíf was to be recited, they should inform him beforehand. The people forgot and the Háfiz Sáhib recited Yásín Sharíf and carried on far beyond it.

One day this person asked: "So many days have passed and we have not reached Yásín Sharíf yet?" The people said: "Why not? Yásín Sharíf was recited some time back and Háfiz Sáhib is way beyond." He asked: "Was I present when Yásín Sharíf was recited?" The people said: "Why not? You were here every night. How could you have missed it?" The simple-minded person was dismayed. "I was here when Yásín Sharíf was recited! I won't be able to save myself now!"

The reason for his dismay was the following: He had seen on a number of occasions that, when a person is dying, people read Yásín Sharíf. Of course, this is done to ease the death of the person, to allow the rúh to leave the body without difficulty. This person saw Yásín Sharíf being recited and the person over whom it was recited, died. The thought became fixed in the person's mind that whoever listens to Yásín Sharíf will die. If he were to hear Yásín Sharíf he would die. Obviously, reason and logic had nothing to do with it. This thought was so overpowering that he fell unconscious. He was carried home, but he did not recover and passed away.

Are these not beneficial lessons? Are they not worth listening to? Have you heard them before? Admittedly, these incidents are rarities, but they adequately illustrate the potential power of thought and serve as

valuable lessons. These discussions lend strength to one's thinking. On the appropriate occasion these talks will bring calmness and serenity within the person.

Inner strength is not dependent on changing the thinking of the next person. No. One should change one's own thinking with the power of one's own thoughts. I have already mentioned my personal experience. This produces tremendous inner strength. However, we find people sitting down with one fixed idea which they are unwilling to change. That is why feebleness is increasing day by day. Just remember the qissah related by Hadhratwálá: how húshyár the little boy turned out to be when confronted by a raging elephant. He was unperturbed and maintained his dignity.

To repeat: the therapy for thoughts is through thought. This is a special branch of knowledge called Nasiyátí-'ilm.

We have discussed the second question. We now come to the third question asked by Bábá Faríd Shakr Ganj رحمة الله عليه.

The third question: Who is one who is ghaní (rich)?

"The third question I asked was: 'Who is one who is ghaní?' "

I am sure you are all thinking that the answer is simple: a ghaní is one who has one lákh rúpís (100 000 rúpís). Let us see...

"All 600 auliyá-Alláh gave the same reply: 'A ghaní is one who has no tamá' in him.' "

The 600 auliyá-Alláh are saying that a rich person is one who has no avarice in him. And we thought it was possessing thousands and millions! A person may well possess millions, but if he has greed (lálach) and avarice (tamá') in him, he is not rich (ghaní) – tamá' is the direct opposite of being ghaní.

The fourth question: Who is one who is gharíb (poor)?

We now come to the fourth question. "The fourth question I put to them was: 'Who is one who is gharíb?' "

"All 600 auliyá-Alláh gave the same reply: 'A gharíb is one who has no qaná'at.' " A poor person is one who has no contentment. Qaná'at is the direct opposite of greed (hirs). That person who has hirs is not wealthy

(ghaní); and that person who has contentment (qaná'at) is not poor (gharíb).

Let us ponder. Despite possessing material wealth, one is still filled with greed and avarice. What kind of richness is that? Richness (ghená) is a quality connected with the heart, not with one's outside condition. One speaks about a "big-hearted person," meaning a generous person, indicating richness to be connected with a person's heart. Ghená is one of the praiseworthy qualities, the akhláqe-hamídah, which are connected with the heart. The heart is the seat of a number of praiseworthy qualities, ghená being just one of them. On the other hand, tamá' is one of the akhláqe-razílah which are connected with the nafs. Similarly, qaná'at is of the akhláqe-hamídah, connected with the heart; whereas hirs is of the akhláqe-razílah, connected with the nafs. The person with hirs is obsessed with materialism, thinking of nothing else day and night, desiring his wealth to double and treble. He has no contentment. The person with qaná'at is at the opposite pole. He avoids harám wealth. He does not look with eyes of desire at others' wealth. He is contented – he makes sabr on meagre possessions.

Thus, the opposite of hirs is qaná'at; the opposite of gharíb is ghená.

This discussion on the four questions asked by Bábá Faríd Shakr Ganj رحمة الله عليه forms part of our discussion on mu'ásharat. That person who is an áqil, who has ma'rifat, his mu'ásharat is made. That person who is húshyár, who is not perturbed by any situation, his mu'ásharat is made. That person who has no tamá', but has ghená – one who has no avarice, but possesses richness – his mu'ásharat is made. That person who has no hirs, but has qaná'at – one who has no greed, but has contentment – his mu'ásharat is made. Such a person, within himself, has attained the status of sabr as commanded by Alláh Ta'álá in the following áyet:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْااصْبِرُوْا – *O you who believe, endure...*

O you Believers, if some personal difficulty befalls you, one which causes you fear and anxiety, some illness, a shortfall of money, and so forth, then isbirú! You should remain steadfast. Do not be frightened. These are expected worldly problems. Living in this world how can you expect

problems not to arise? What type of false hope is that? So, when a difficulty arises – isbirú! Do not be crushed. These are difficulties of a personal nature, so isbirú! On the other hand, you may encounter difficulties from others. Then, sábirú!

وَصَابِرُوْا – *and outdo all others in endurance...*

Others may say or do things not to your liking. Then, too, do not be frightened by their opposition. Be courageous and steadfast. Do not lose your composure. Sábirú! This is when something against your temperament takes place from others: do not be overcome, but remain steadfast.

The position of siyásit (politics)

The áyet does not end there, but goes on:

وَرَابِطُوْا – *And be ever ready. (S.3.200.)*

"Rábitú" applies at a national level. When threats are encountered from other countries, one's country should be steadfast in protecting its frontiers by building a defence force. There should be no weaknesses in the defences of your borders so as to allow the opposing forces to enter. The "rábitú" is instructing us in siyásit (politics) – the protection of one's country's frontiers against invading forces. In a way "isbirú" and "sábirú" are also siyásit – siyásit of the bátin: protect your internal milieu from any forces wanting to disrupt it.

What is siyásit? It is defined as "tadbíre-hasn": the temperament has to operate at such a level of statesmanship that the best of methods are adopted to repulse any opposition that may present itself.

This is siyásit. Siyásit is not the deceit and fraud implied by the word today. That is why we say: That is no Sharí'ah which does not include siyásit; and that is no siyásit which does not fall within the Sharí'ah.

Remember the above very well. You find people saying: "What connection is there between the Sharí'ah and siyásit? The two are independent." The politicians say that the Sharí'ah should not intrude into siyásit. This view was expressed to me personally by the principal of a major college in Bangalore during a conversation we were having. I had been listening silently to him, but when he expressed the view that siyásit is independent

of the Sharí'ah, I spoke out. "That is not the case," I explained. "There is no such thing as a Sharí'ah if it does not include siyásit. And siyásit can only be such if it conforms to the Sharí'ah. Every aspect of siyásit falls under the Sharí'ah. Siyásit is an important branch of the Sharí'ah." Siyásit is not "sáyisiyat" – looking after horses!

Our theme is mu'ásharat – to live a life of ease and comfort with one another in the social context. The relevant áyet of the Qur'án Sharíf was quoted to you.

Coming back to the rights of parents

The áyet starts off with the rights of parents:

وَبالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا – *(Show) kindness unto parents,*

One should adopt the best of conduct towards one's parents. The rights of parents have been given top priority. Their rights are most important, coming first and taking precedence over others with regard to manners and respect, honour and obedience.

The rights of relatives

This does not mean that the rights of others should be ignored. The áyet continues:

وَبذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ – *and unto near kindred,*

This refers to those relatives who are close – uncles and aunts, in-laws, and so forth. They should also be treated with respect and hospitality. With them too one should not behave in such a way as to cause any unpleasantness.

The rights of orphans

وَالْيَتٰمىٰ – *and orphans,*

The orphans: these poor one's have nobody. So, do not ignore them. Our good conduct should extend towards them as well. The áyet simply states this. The Hadíth Sharíf extols the virtues: should you rub an affectionate hand on their heads, the amount of nekí written in your account will be equal to the amount of hair on their heads! Who is capable of doing this?

Only that Muslim in whose nature there has appeared some humility, some humbleness. Only such a person is capable of showing affection to these poor, lonely orphans by lovingly rubbing their heads and talking to them with kindness and magnanimity, cheering their forlorn hearts.

Rights of the poverty stricken, the misákín and faqír

وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ – *and the needy,*

The poverty-stricken – those who have just sufficient for one meal. There is a difference between the miskín and the faqír. The faqír is that unfortunate person who does not have enough even for a single meal.

Rights of neighbours close-by

وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبىٰ – *and the near neighbour,*

Those neighbours who are near. With them too one should conduct oneself well.

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Alláh Ta’álá sent such orders with regard to neighbours that I feared that they may even have to be given a share in one’s inheritance.” This gives an indication of the rights neighbours have over one.

The qissah about Hadhratwálá in this regard has been mentioned several times. I make no apology for repeating it. Repetition occurs in the Qur’án Sharíf as well. For example the qissah of Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام and Fir’oun has been repeated several times.

The object of repetition is to embed that particular lesson in one’s heart, so that one can easily recall when the occasion arises what is imbued in the heart and then act accordingly. It is for this reason that Hadhratwálá used to say that one should read a kitáb at least three times. The first reading is merely looking at the words. A little bit here and there will be understood. Only after the third reading will one understand the contents.

Qissah concerning Hadhratwálá seeing to the neighbour’s need

The qissah concerning Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه:

Hadhratwálá was a light sleeper. His eating was also very light: one to one-

and-a-half chapátís at night, some milk before retiring. My Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه was amazing in every way. From time to time he used to relate to us incidents from his personal life, giving us an insight into his amazing lifestyle. Speaking about his sleep, he once said: "Sometimes I am unable to sleep and lie with eyes wide open. I look around and see the rest of the household sleeping peacefully. I feel tremendously pleased: even if I cannot sleep, the rest of the household was sleeping comfortably!"

What a clean heart! Whereas we? We are the direct opposite. We grudge others their comfort! But Hadhratwálá's heart used to gladden at the comfort of others.

Here is another insight: Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه had a temperament that was amazingly organised and systematic. He told us: "I keep pencil and paper by my cushion. While busy writing a kitáb, at times, my eyes open at night and some idea or topic flashes through my mind, worthy of being included in the kitáb. I immediately write it down. Who knows whether I will still remember it in the morning?"

System and organisation are typified here. Our condition is such, however, that we would be more worried about our sleep: If I were to look for a pen and paper and sit down to write, my sleep would get spoiled!" Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه gave 'ilm priority over sleep. The preciousness of Díní knowledge was greater than that of sleep.

Back to our qissah: It was night time and Hadhratwálá was asleep. Being a light sleeper, Hadhratwálá's eyes suddenly opened. Something had disturbed his sleep: it was the sound of somebody groaning in pain reached his ears. That was enough to make his sleep disappear completely. Hadhratwálá's nature was soft, very soft. Hadhratwálá used to say: "It is a good thing I have no children. Why? Because I have a soft nature. One does not know what children get up to and, with my soft nature, it would have been very difficult for me. It is a very good thing I have no children!"

Hadhratwálá had hiddat, but not shiddat

Hadhratwálá had been maligned by people saying that he was vehement and severe. Hadhratwálá's reply to this accusation was as follows: "I have no shiddat (vehemence) in me at all. However, I confess I do have hiddat

(sharpness). I admit that, at times, when some ill manners – matters concerning tarbiyet – come before me, sharpness does enter my attitude. Yes, I do show some hiddat then. But shiddat – that I should put somebody in trouble or cause him unnecessary difficulty? No, never! As to hiddat, I admit to that." Note the superb self-analysis!

Hadhratwálá continued: "And, dear brother, the hiddat also has its reasons. What can I say? Firstly I was born through the du'á of a majzúb. All the children my parents had previously, had died shortly after birth. Once a majzúb was in the area and somebody from the household mentioned this plight to him. He made du'á: 'A child be born, then another. One is for me, the other for you.' I was born shortly afterwards."

This is the first factor, that Hadhratwálá was born through the du'á of a majzúb, who has greater hiddat in him.

"The second factor is that I had as my wet nurse in infancy, the wife of a butcher. The third factor is that I was given strychnine." Strychnine was used in medications. Its effect is to produce heat. "And brother, the fourth factor is that our genealogy is Fárúqí." Hadhratwálá's family on the father's side are descendants of Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه who had hiddat in his nature.

"That is why my nature has hiddat in it, but not shiddat. People have baselessly maligned me. Those who live with me and have had an opportunity to observe closely will vouchsafe the fact that I am soft, so soft that you will not find anyone else as soft. Others are being frightened from coming here. Yes, others are being frightened off. But carry on. What harm is it to me?"

Back to our qissah: The sound of somebody groaning in pain reached his ears. Hadhratwálá was now wide awake. He went downstairs. In both houses, that of Barí-Pírání Sáhibáh and Chotí-Pírání Sáhibáh, servants were kept for duties outside the house. He woke up Sulaímán Sáhib, the servant. "I hear somebody groaning. Can you find out who it is and what the problem is?"

Nowadays, who bothers? All of you sitting here think. Does anybody bother? In this day and age, even if the wife is groaning the husband will not trouble himself to find out the reason. Why lose one's sleep? What

chance of bothering about the groaning outside?

The servant went to inquire and returned shortly to report: “Baríbí, the neighbour, says that her daughter-in-law is in labour. She is having severe pains without making much progress.” “Ofo!” Hadhratwálá said: “I still need to make ghusl... Never mind.” Hadhratwálá went immediately to make ghusl. He then wrote out a ta’wíz. There is a specific ta’wíz to be used during childbirth to ease the pain of labour.

Seeing that a Qur’ánic áyet is written in making a ta’wíz, the person must be in a state of tahárat and he should also have wudhú. We used to see Hadhratwálá write a ta’wíz on a piece of paper and have a second blank piece of paper underneath with which to cover the ta’wíz paper. Hadhratwálá used to explain: “This is just a precaution. One is writing a Qur’ánic áyet and one does not know whether the person to whom it is handed has wudhú or not. If he has no wudhú, how can he touch it? That is why the second blank paper is wrapped around it.” It is quite permissible to take the ta’wíz in one’s hand if it is wrapped up thus, even if one has no wudhú. These teaching points Hadhratwálá used to mention for our benefit.

In any case, the servant took the ta’wíz to the neighbour. A short while later, with the grace of Alláh Ta’álá and the barkat of Hadhratwálá, the infant was born.

This qissah is one to ponder over in the context of our discussion. Remember we are discussing the neighbour who is close by, one whose voice will reach one’s ears. The neighbour far away will not be readily heard.

So, you have seen Hadhratwálá’s behaviour in this regard. What have you seen? You have seen how he forfeited his sleep to fulfil the rights of the neighbour close by. Not only that, but he took on the extra effort of making ghusl at that time of the night in order to fulfil this right completely.

At times, a sheikh will disclose personal details of his behaviour to his muríds for the lessons contained therein as far as tarbiyet is concerned. He does this in the same vein as quoting incidents concerning others – for the lessons or examples contained in them. These personal details are related for the benefit of those close to him. Of course, there are others sitting

and listening as well, but these listen indifferently. Not so those who are close to the sheikh – they are greatly affected because of their great love and affection for their sheikh, affection not showered on others.

The neighbours close by: Alláh Ta'álá is plainly giving a command on good relationships and excellent behaviour with those neighbours who are close by. This command is obviously concerning mu'ásharatí lifestyle and not mas'alas concerning trade, lending and borrowing!

Rights of neighbours at a distance

The áyet continues:

وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ – *and the distant neighbour,*

The neighbours a distance away. Good relationships and excellent behaviour should extend to them as well and not only to the neighbours close by. Note the sequence: parents come first, then relatives, then the poor and the orphans, then the neighbours close by and now the neighbours at a distance. Do not think you can ignore them, for they also have rights over you. If, for some reason or other, the immediate neighbour is unconcerned, you, as a distant neighbour, should have some concern.

Here is another application of the áyet: Several students share a dormitory in the "Boarding." Among the students are some who are poor, others may be better off. The one student is a neighbour of the next. But you find that a poor student takes ill and the others in the room do not bother. His groaning is ignored. Nobody wipes his brow or presses his aching back. Nobody makes an effort to get medicines for him.

Do you understand? Do you see how the practical side of the áyet fits in? These are points to bear in mind. This is the mu'ásharatí lifestyle.

A personal incident: Hadhratwálá visiting Hadhrat when ill

Our akábir exemplified this lifestyle. It is not necessary to labour the point, but, nevertheless, let me relate an incident. I had become ill. I was still living across the courtyard, upstairs. This was long before the other episode mentioned earlier on. I got the news that Hadhratwálá had come from Thánah Bhawan specifically to visit me. There was a chair and an extra

chárpáí in the room, but the door frame was low. What if Hadhratwálá was to knock his head as he entered?

While these thoughts were racing through my mind, Hadhratwálá walked into the room. Saláms were exchanged and Hadhratwálá enquired about my health. He then went to sit on the chárpáí. I slipped off the bed and went to sit on the chair facing him. Hadhratwálá suggested: "Why do you not lie down?" I was feeling strong enough to sit so I did not take up the suggestion. Hadhratwálá merely said: "Very well." Hadhratwálá remained silent. He was sitting with his head bent down. I was sitting directly in front of him. After a few moments I started getting palpitations. A fine sweat broke out all over my body. I said: "Hadhrat, I am feeling a bit weak. I will lie down." Hadhratwálá said: "I had already suggested to you that you should lie down to rest on the chárpáí. Very well." I went to lie down.

Háfiz Manfa'at Sáhib was also in the room. In those early days there were only two of us teaching here, Háfiz Manfa'at Sáhib and myself. Hadhratwálá had actually sent me here and we were under his patronage. Háfiz Manfa'at Sáhib saw me perspiring and came forward to remove my mauzas which I used to wear when the weather was cold. He started taking off the right mauzah first. I stopped him. "No take off the left first."

The correct procedure as far as clothes, mauzas, shoes and so forth is concerned is to take off from the left first and then the right. When putting on, start from the right.

After a short while, Hadhratwálá left. Then I understood what had happened: Hadhratwálá had made tawajjuh on me for the relief of illness. Hadhratwálá's concentration with his head bent down and my feeling light-headed while sitting in front of him, was his tawajjuh on me. After that I felt much better. The fever and weakness disappeared.

Háfiz Manfa'at Sáhib's routine was to go to Thánah Bhawan in the evenings, stay the night there and return in the morning. The following morning, on returning from Thánah Bhawan, he told me: "As I was leaving the khánqáh Hadhratwálá saw me and asked me how you were. I said that you were now well. Hadhratwálá was pleased."

From this incident you can gauge the quality of the mu'ásharatí lifestyle of the seniors towards the juniors: how much affection they had for the

juniors. Hadhratwálá also took care to attend regularly the annual jalsah that took place here in Ramadhán. He used to arrive here in a pálkí in order to participate in the jalsah.

We are discussing the rights of the neighbour at a distance. Those of you who are ahle-'ilm would have studied the translations and tafsír of this áyet. You should judge to what extent our ahle-'ilm have applied this áyet. Yes, those who are applying this áyet practically are the súfíyá-ikrám, the 'ulemá-e-rabbání, the 'ulemá e-haqqání. These are ahle-'ilm who understand the Qur'án and Hadíth Sharíf related to the bátin. Is the Qur'án Sharíf merely to recite, or is it there to act on as well? The Qur'án Sharíf is to be studied, to be understood and to be propagated. Even after having studied it, if we do not act on its injunctions, who do we expect to act on them? The non-Muslim, Tom, Dick and Harry? Think about it. Do not look at me – what must I do if these are the topics that come to mind?

This topic came to mind because of your headlong rush into the majliskhánah, falling over each other, one on top of the other. This made me speak on the mu'ásharatí lifestyle. There are still more aspects to discuss.

The Qur'án Sharíf is there for us to practise on its injunctions. Among these injunctions of Alláh Ta'álá are those related to mu'ásharat. Various incidents from the lives of our akábir have been related to illustrate the application of these injunctions so that we may pattern our lives accordingly. A molví, one who has studied the Qur'án and Hadíth Sharíf, should be aware of his status and live accordingly. That is, he should continuously be aware of the mu'ásharat set forth in the Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf and he should be continuously watchful of his behaviour. This stock-taking is called ihtisáb. So important is this ihtisáb that a country with Islámic rule will have an appointed person as a mohtasib, who will go around taking stock of the state of the people.

'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه during his khiláfat, used to perform this task himself, patrolling the city of Madínah himself. The situation in the country will determine the number of people appointed for this task. One person may not be enough, so others may be required to ensure patrolling takes place day and night. The mohtasib will keep the ruler informed of the state

of the people, both their worldly status and their Díní Status. He will also give guidance to the people accordingly, with hikmat (wisdom), not with hukúmat (authoritarianism.) This is at a national level.

At the individual level, every Muslim is a mohtasib unto himself – he is ever watchful over his nafs. He takes stock of every breath of his. After he speaks he takes stock: "This is what I said. I was speaking to that person. Have I not hurt him in any way by what I said?" This exercise should be carried out regularly every time he speaks until it becomes a habit to review his spoken words. There is no such thing as speaking freely. As far as action is concerned a Muslim definitely has no freedom of action – he is not free to act uninhibitedly. So, how can he speak uninhibitedly? Speaking anything, to anybody, at any time – is this the quality of an ádmí? Is this being civilised? A Muslim is accountable for his speech as well as his actions. At all times his speech should be respectful and cultured. Honour and dignity should not be discarded.

Do you understand? Huqúqe-mu'ásharatí – the rights of social inter-relationships – include ján, mál, kám and kalám. Our akábir exemplified this lifestyle.

Mauláná Qásim's رحمة الله عليه treatment of a bhanghí from Thánah Bhawan

This incident was related to us by Hadhratwálá.

A bhanghí from Thánah Bhawan came to Deoband to meet Mauláná Qásim رحمة الله عليه. Mauláná Qásim رحمة الله عليه treated him so hospitably as to make one think that the person was not a bhanghí, but some relative visiting him. He even ordered a huqqah to be brought for him. After the bhanghí had left somebody remarked to Mauláná Qásim رحمة الله عليه: "Hadhrat, you showered so much hospitality on him as if he were some visiting relative. He was a mere bhanghí." Mauláná Qásim رحمة الله عليه responded: "You saw him as a mere bhanghí. I saw him as a Thánwí – a resident of the town where my sheikh, Hajísáhib, resides."

These are matters concerning the heart, concerning one's ta'alluq. They need no explanation. How can one explain the elegance and exquisiteness of the temperaments of our akábir? Take another instance:

Another qissah: Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه and the gift from Thánah Bhawan

Some people from Rámpúr went for hajj. While in Makkah they also visited Hajísáhib. Hajísáhib had by this time made hijrat from Thánah Bhawan and was residing in Makkah. As a gift for Hajísáhib, these people from Rámpúr had made a mussallá of deer skin which they presented to Hajísáhib. Hajísáhib graciously accepted the gift and took the proffered mussallá . He then commented. "But I perceive the scent of Thánah Bhawan emanating from this mussallá ." One of the visitors said: "We had gone out hunting, but we found no game close by. We eventually landed up in the forests of Thánah Bhawan where we spotted this deer and hunted it down. It was our desire to present Hadhrat with a gift, so we made a mussallá of its skin. Quite correctly, this mussallá is from the skin of a deer from Thánah Bhawan."

Such was the exquisiteness of the senses of our akábir. Through mujáhadah and riyádhát such secrets of Taríqat were experienced by them. At times, they revealed a little, not to everyone, but to those close to them, those involved in tarbiyet. Otherwise, they remained silent. Such incidents would not be understood by all.

Nowadays, peoples' attitudes are such that they are cynical and will deny such occurrences. But remember, by denying them one is placing oneself in a potentially dangerous situation. Such a cynic does not get on well with others. He feels uncomfortable in this type of gathering. Yet, you find such a person coming to sit here. His intention is not to rectify himself, so his attitude to the talks is completely negative. Instead of improving, such a person deteriorates and the respectability in him disappears. Despite being learned, he speaks rudely even to his father – disrespectfully addresses him as "tú"!

One is not being derogatory to anybody. These points are mentioned for the sake of the sincere ones, so that they may safeguard themselves by not associating with such people. Not to be misunderstood: those who come for some necessary work are not being prevented from doing so. But to cultivate their friendship even after you know that they are different, that they are such as are vindictive to their own parents?

These are incidental matters. Let us continue:

Rights of those sitting close by

After mentioning the neighbours close by and at a distance, the áyet carries on:

وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ – *And the companion by your side,*

Those who are sitting close to you. This is what I wished to bring to your attention, even though it comes late in the áyet. Those sitting close to you in the majlis, see that you conduct yourself properly with them. Neither cause them inconvenience nor grief. Be considerate when you sit. Do not crowd them. Your sitting with them may be for a short while as here, or it may be for a lengthy period as at a jalsah. In coming to sit or going to make musáfahah, observe the same good manners. Be considerate. Do not push. Do not fall one over another. Do not run or jump over others. In your haste you may hit somebody with your elbow, knock another with your knee or strike somebody with your feet. This is the application of the Qur'ánic áyet in our immediate situation. Do not cause the person next to you any inconvenience or difficulty, neither physically nor in any other way. When speaking do not address him in a hurtful manner.

Parents and relatives have been mentioned. Neighbours have been mentioned. Alláh Ta'álá now mentions the people you are sitting with. In a way, they are also your neighbours, but their importance has necessitated that they be mentioned in a special category, the "sáhib-bil-jambe". Neither by one's speech nor one's actions should we harm or inconvenience the next person. However, there are other ways of harming the next person.

For example: The person next to you has something in his pocket. "Áhá! It is a pen." The pen is quietly removed and taken. This is causing him material loss.

Another example: One comes in and sprawls down. The person next to you now has to sit all cramped up. This is causing him physical inconvenience. And so forth.

We see thus, that the Qur'án Sharíf also instructs us on how to conduct ourselves with the person sitting next to us. All this falls in the category of mu'ásharat which, as Hadhratwálá had noted, even the learned and díndár have taken out from the Dín and discarded. In actual fact, mu'ásharat is an

important aspect of one's life. The friction and unhappiness one sees among people are mainly due to degeneration of mu'ásharat. Only occasionally is it due to corruption in dealings and transactions (mu'ámulát.) This is because mu'ásharat affects us 24 hours a day, whereas mu'ámulát have their set times. Mu'ásharat affects us in the home and outside; mu'ámulát only occur in the business setting.

Rights of the wayfarer

So, let us continue with the áyet:

وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ – *And the wayfarer.*

The musáfir, the person on a journey: Be considerate to others when you are travelling. When we were children we used to hear the older people saying: "Safr-ká-sakhr". "Sakhr" means Jahannam. Later, when studying Hadíth Sharíf we read in Bukhárí Sharíf:

اَلسَّفَرُ قِطْعَةٌ مِنَ النَّارِ

Journeying is a piece of the fire of Jahannam.

No matter how comfortable one tries to make one's journey, one cannot equal the comfort and freedom one enjoys at home. At home one can eat at any time, sleep at any time. One can do what one likes, when one likes. This freedom is absent during a journey. Travelling is a big mujáhadah.

Once, when travelling in England, we arrived at our destination in a certain city. Now, my schedule and habits during travels are the same as those at home. Sleeping has its proper time. No such thing as feeling a bit tired so have a nap. This has not happened during travels and it has not happened on arrival back home. Meals have their times. No question of feeling peckish so have a meal.

Hadhrat's "mazhab" during travels

On our arrival we were welcomed and then seated and conversation commenced. Somebody suggested: "Hadhrat, would you care to lie down for a while?" I replied: "No, it is not my nature to do so." He seemed surprised. "Hadhrat has travelled such a long distance and for quite a long time." I said: "Yes, but during travel my mazhab is different."

When those present heard me speak about another mazhab, they were all surprised. "But we are all of the same mazhab!" "No. During travels my mazhab is different," I repeated. Everybody was now curious. What is this new mazhab Hadhrat is coming with? I explained: "My mazhab is this that, when about to travel, the moment I set my foot outside the door of my house I shut the door on all thoughts of comfort and of getting angry. This is my mazhab when travelling!"

This is so because one comes across many such things that go against one's temperament during one's travels. As a guest at somebody's place you have in mind a certain schedule, but your host does just the opposite! Your diet is of a certain nature and you are served the opposite. And so forth. If one's temperament is such that it is easily irritated, the next thing that happens is anger wells up and then this anger is evident in the words one utters. So, one should lock up one's anger at home and leave aside all thoughts of comfort. After I had explained my "mazhab" my host did not insist on my going to lie down and we carried on speaking.

Here, in Jalálábád, we have lunch approximately at noon, long before Zuhr. Noon came and I expected everybody to be getting ready for lunch. Nothing happened. It went onto 1p.m. Still nothing. Lunch was served only after Zuhr, which is the custom over there. So, one has to adjust one's routine, but one does not say anything.

In the cold climate over there, tea is served at odd times. My habit here was to have tea after Zuhr, just before 'Asr. This was my routine during travels too. Over there every now and then somebody would offer tea which I would politely refuse. They commented: "We find you amazing! Others who come to visit us tend to drink tea every now and then. Also, quite a bit is spent on buying pán. Whereas you do not chew pán at all and tea you refuse."

"Safr-hadhratan" – habits in travel should be like those at home. The question of usúls is different. My Hadhrat used to say: "The usúls of safr (travel) are different and the usúls of hadr (residence) are different. One cannot adopt the same principles in travel that one adopts at home." In safr there is caution and consideration and one has to overlook many things.

"Ibnis-sabíl" – the musáfir, the wayfarer. In the other categories that have

been dealt with are people we know. We now come to the wayfarer who is a complete stranger. He should also be shown due consideration. The status of a person at home may be such that he enjoys all-round respect and honour. However, when he is travelling he is just as ordinary as anyone else.

For example: the provincial administrator, in his office or at home, will be shown great respect which his status demands. However, if he is travelling in his personal capacity, he will be treated like any other ordinary person by those who do not know him. If he tries to exert his authority in this situation, it will get him nowhere.

One can only exclaim one's wonder at the depth with which Alláh Ta'álá has laid out our mu'ásharat: "Wáh! Alláh-miyán! Wáh!" Is there anything left out by Alláh Ta'álá in the Qur'án Sharíf? Definitely not!

The social environment is determined by oneself

Every aspect of our life has been touched on, what makes up our social environment, our "mahol". The English word "society" has become popular. We often hear people justifying their behaviour by saying: "What can we do? Society is like that." The person blaming "society" is actually exposing his own weakness. He is confessing to his own cowardice. From the fear of "society" he is refraining from that which is polite, decent and good and, as a Muslim, that which the Sharí'ah has commanded. His excuse is that the "mahol," the social environment, is to be blamed.

This person is testifying to his cowardice. By succumbing to the environment he has had the bravado knocked out of him. Just look at the dressing of a Muslim, even that of the unsophisticated peasant: thigh-hugging pants, a "kurtiyah" till the hips (the kurtah has disappeared) and a head not covered by a topí. The Muslim has himself removed his royal crown, the topí, from his head. Whereas the suit a Muslim should be wearing should consist of a topí, kurtah and izár and shoes. The Islámic mu'ásharatí lifestyle has been discarded and destroyed.

"Ibnis-sabíl" – the wayfarer. He is a stranger, not known to you. Yet, treat him with due consideration whether he is a Muslim or non-Muslim. Observe his rights. Do not sit in the bus or train in such a way as to inconvenience

him. If a woman climbs on and there is no vacant seat for her, your response should be: “Bhen, please sit here. I have been sitting long enough.” This is the Islámic code of manners.

An incident showing the effect of good manners

We had a safír here, a roving ambassador – a very good man, who has now passed away.

He related an experience of his to us: “Once, I was travelling by train. The coach was full. At different stops some men climbed on and others climbed off. At one stop a non-Muslim woman climbed on. There was no vacant seat for her. I stood up and called to her to sit on the seat I had vacated, which she did. A non-Muslim man seated nearby commented: ‘Molvíjí, you have won! I was watching you and noted your friendly attitude to your fellow religionists. When this lady entered, one of my co-religionists, I wondered what your attitude would be. But you have won – you stood up and offered her your seat. Today I have seen what Islámic manners really are!”

These are manners which we have discarded! During the period that Islám spread far and wide, did Islám spread by the sword? No, never! This is a malicious lie levelled at Muslims. Islám spread through the good character and behaviour of the Muslims. You will remember that the use of the sword was specifically forbidden in the early period of Islám during the first 13 years in Makkah. Yet, Islám spread. So, what was it? Good character! Even afterwards, when the use of the sword was allowed, it was not used at random. And later still, when Muslims had gained victory over other countries, it was not the sword that was held over the heads of the defeated. After gaining victory, the country was, at times, handed to its inhabitants to rule, but under certain conditions: they were told to pay jizyah, to avoid oppression, not to cause hardship to Muslims, not to trouble the Muslim traveller, not to prevent anyone from entering the fold of Islám, and so forth. But, you rule. Our objective is not to take over the rule.

Look at the attitude to the zimmí (those non-Muslims living under Islámic rule): They were to be dealt with on an equal footing with Muslims. For example: if a zimmí was wrongfully killed by a Muslim, that Muslim was answerable for his murder.

Rights of animals

Let us proceed further. So far we have dealt with the rights of different categories of humans. What about the rights of animals? Islám teaches that the domestic animal in your possession is your responsibility. You have to see to its food and drink, to its shelter, to its protection from the heat of summer and the cold of winter – all to be done in the correct manner.

Should you wish to slaughter an animal, it is incumbent on you to use a very sharp knife. Should you use a blunt knife you will have committed a sin for which you will be called to account. So that, on the Day of Qiyámat, that animal will ask to be compensated for the unnecessary suffering inflicted on it. The rights of the animal will then be requited. The owner of the animal will not be in a position to deny his guilt. Alláh Ta'álá will then order him: "Lie down!" The animal will then be told: "Go ahead and take your revenge." When an animal dies, that is the end of it. There is no Jannat and no Jahannam for an animal. It will be turned into dust. Nevertheless, the rights of every animal will be requited.

Rights of non-Muslims

These are the rights that the creation enjoys, which are rights demanded by Alláh Ta'álá. By observing the rights of the creation, one is in fact observing the rights of Alláh Ta'álá.

Take this illustration: A person does not hurl abuse at the child's father, but the child is abused. Will the father of that child not take offence? Of course he will. If you understand the above, then you will understand the following as well:

The káfir is accountable to Alláh Ta'álá for his kufr, but, as for you, you are accountable for your behaviour towards him as far as his mu'ásharatí rights are concerned.

Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq's رضی الله تعالی عنه mother-in-law came from Makkah to visit her daughter in Madínah. Hadhrat Abúbakr's رضی الله تعالی عنه wife was worried. She went to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and enquired: "My mother has come. She has not brought ímán as yet. She is a káfirah. What should I do?" Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم replied: "She is your mother. Treat her well. Be hospitable and charitable towards her." The same would apply if the

father was a káfir and the children were Muslim. If this is the right of a káfir parent, how much more respectfully must a mu'min parent not be treated? Because of his ímán his status is obviously higher.

Do you understand?

Today, the concept of a mu'ásharatí lifestyle has been placed before you with the necessary proofs. This is necessary for the furtherance of your isláh, for the improvement of your habits, actions and deeds and your total lifestyle. Different approaches have been adopted so that you may become aware of your shortcomings. You have been shown how to behave towards those staying with you, your parents, your brothers and sisters and children, your relatives, in-laws, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces, your neighbours, and so forth. The appropriate proofs have been laid before you so that you may act on what you have heard.

Youngsters present here will have had their ears opened and made aware of their disrespect for their parents and the grief they cause them by going around with any type of company, going out when they feel like it and coming home at their own time.

Our age was different. One could not leave the house without the permission of one's parents. The mere thought of coming home late would send shivers of fear down our spines. Nowadays, youngsters come and go as they like. There is no concern about the hour – early or late, it makes no difference. They go where they want to and sit around with whom they want to. This could not be done in the past. The habits of the past are the very teachings of Islám which have been handed down to us from 1400 years ago.

The áyet on mu'ásharat came to mind today because of the way people came running in this morning. In the rush, there is bound to be bumping and falling, knocking of knees and elbows and striking of feet. In sitting down, there is bound to be thumping and pushing. Is that not so? So, this áyet came to mind, instructing on mu'ásharat. It is an all-encompassing áyet, extending to the consideration to be given to the musáfir even. If the traveller is to be given consideration, what about the person sitting next to you? And the neighbours at a distance, the neighbours close by, the orphans and the poor, one's relatives and one's parents? If each category

has priority over the previous one, one can imagine the rights parents enjoy!

’Ibádat and ’abdiyet

Today’s lesson, today’s majlis has been on mu’ásharat. It should be obvious to you now that mu’ásharat is also ’ibádat. One type of ’ibádat is obviously ’ibádat – namáz and so forth. There is another ’ibádat which is indirectly so. In appearance it does not seem to be ’ibádat. The question arises: If this second category does not have the appearance of ’ibádat, how can we say it is ’ibádat? The answer is: When Alláh Ta’álá’s orders are carried out as they should be, one receives thawáb. Whatever carries with it thawáb falls in the category of ’ibádat.

Islámic mu’ásharat is ’ibádat

It is on this basis that Islámic mu’ásharat is ’ibádat. So, do not think that five times namáz at its proper times with jamá’at and takbíre-ulá, performed with all the proper arkáns, or tiláwat of the Qur’án Sharíf with proper tajwíd, or sitting with tasbíh and making zikr, are the only forms of ’ibádat. It is important to attain perfection in all categories of the Dín and not only in those categories which are obviously ’ibádat. That person leaving out this important section of the Dín cannot be called an ’ábed. He is not deserving of the title of being an ’ábed. He has not developed ’abdíyet in himself yet. We find that when he sees a poor person he turns his face away. Where will he condescend to concern himself about the conditions of the poor? We also find that, when travelling, he is only concerned about his own comfort, irrespective of the inconvenience caused others. And so forth.

From this áyet of the Qur’án Sharíf we have come to realise, through our shortcomings, what a major ’ibádat we have left out. Yet we are happy within ourselves that we are performing Tahajjud and making tiláwat, that our beards conform to the requirements of the Sharí’ah, that our trousers legs are now above the ankle and that the length of our kurtah now extends lower than before. Yes, we feel very happy in our hearts about these. Yet, we have discarded many sections of the Dín, one of which is mu’ásharat.

For this we will be accountable to Alláh Ta'álá. Yes, Alláh Ta'álá will ask: "Why did you speak in such a way as to hurt the next person's feelings, as to offend him?"

To offend a person is nothing compared to offending the Dín

Here please note: If the next person is offended by some aspect of the Sharí'ah, then this is not called hurting his feelings. Also, if there is offence to the Dín by following somebody's opinion, then one cannot accept his opinion, no matter how offended he feels. His opinion has to be ignored. In other words, to offend a person is nothing compared to offending the Dín.

Nowadays, a completely wrong meaning is attached to the expression "offending somebody". We find, at times, westernised persons telling the molvís: "What is the matter? You are not prepared to accept anything we say. We feel very offended and it is not a nice thing to offend others." When confronted in this way, there is no question of being overwhelmed. Our response: "We are there to serve. Our lives are there to please, to cheer, to bring ease and comfort, to be magnanimous. But we have no choice. What can we do? To accept your views would be to offend our Dín. At this point the Dín says something else. And you also admit that this is Dín. Most probably you were not aware what the Dín had to say on the issue, that is why you voiced a different opinion. We are certain that, when you realise your error, you will retract your viewpoint."

When the position has been explained thus, the following response would be forthcoming: "Mauláná, please forgive me, m'áf. I was not aware of the deeper aspects involved. In-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, I will bear it in mind in future."

This is an illustration of the etiquette of speaking. Talk to a person at his level. Islám has certain maxims. This is one of them:

كَلِّمُوا النَّاسَ عَلٰى قَدْرِ عُقُوْلِهِمْ

Talk to a person at his level of intelligence.

There is another one as well:

اَنْزِلِ النَّاسَ عَلٰى مَرَاتِبِهِمْ

Respond to a person according to his status.

It is not within the capabilities of everybody to apply these maxims in the varying situations, bearing in mind the subtleties involved.

A qissah: the Tehsildár comes to visit Hadhratwálá

This reminds me of an incident:

Hadhratwálá used to hold his majálise-ám after Zuhr. The majlise-khás and akhás were held only if there were special visitors. Anybody could come and sit in a majlise-ám. Those who so wished could go forward to make musáfahah, but few could muster up enough courage to actually go forward to do so.

It was during one such majlise-ám that a Hindu orderly entered the majliskhánah and approached Hadhratwálá. "Huzúr," he said after being asked his errand, "The Tehsildár Sáhib has come in his horse-drawn coach. He wishes to meet you." It was still the period of the British Ráj. Horses were still commonly used for travel. Partition took place some years after the demise of Hadhratwálá.

The orderly continued: "I am his orderly and he has sent me to seek permission for him to meet you. His coach is at the entrance."

Here people come in and go out any old how! There was nothing stopping the Tehsildár from having come in to converse with Hadhratwálá. But that would have been out of place. Unannounced and without introduction, it could have led to embarrassing situations. Being a high ranking official, the correct protocol was to send the orderly to seek permission first.

Hadhratwálá gave his permission and the orderly departed to inform the Tehsildár. We were sitting and watching. Hadhratwálá told us: "When the Tehsildár enters, I will stand up, but do not any of you stand up." The Tehsildár was a non-Muslim.

The Tehsildár entered. Next to Hadhratwálá was a space for visitors. Placed there was a quilt and a cushion. A small table stood nearby as well, having some kitábs and a few other items on it. We remained seated. Hadhratwálá placed his hands on the ground for support and started getting up. The

Tehsildár quickly went forward and stopped Hadhratwálá. "Huzúr, do not trouble yourself." Hadhratwálá sat down again. The Tehsildár was seated on one side and made comfortable.

Hadhratwálá then explained: "All the people sitting here are quite aware of the etiquette of receiving a guest. However, I was the one who had instructed them to remain sitting."

Hadhratwálá was answering an unasked question. The thought must have come into the Tehsildár's mind when he entered and saw Hadhratwálá starting to rise: "Why is it that everybody else is sitting while Hadhrat is standing up?" Hadhratwálá had an uncanny ability to anticipate doubts arising in others minds. Hadhratwálá explained further: "Persons like yourself in positions of responsibility have a composed mind. If so many people were to stand up suddenly, all at once, it must cause some disturbance, which would be inconsiderate on our side. It was to preserve your inner tranquillity that I had ordered them not to rise."

Do you understand? Huqúq! Rights of the guest, who was a non-Muslim, but a ruler in his own right.

اَنْزِلِ النَّاسَ عَلٰى مَرَاتِبِهِمْ

Respond to a person according to his status

We were taught everything. Pray we have the taufíq to act accordingly. To act fully and completely on the áyet of the Qur'án and Hadíth Sharíf, on every occasion, taking cognisance of place and person, should be our aim. A point to remember with regard to the incident just related: Hadhratwálá rising for the Tehsildár was neither ta'zímán nor mohabbatan – it was neither out of reverence nor out of love – this would be ná-já'iz. It was ikráman-bizzayf – respect for a guest. It was a portrayal of Islámic manners. It would also fall in the category of dafa'-e-mudharrat – preventing harm. The intention is not jalbe-manfa'at (to derive benefit), which would be ná-já'iz. This I mention in case somebody were to ask: "How could Hadhratwálá stand up for a non-Muslim?"

Du'á

Today the mu'ásharatí lifestyle of a Muslim has been placed before you. May Alláh Ta'álá give us and all of you the taufíq arzání to act according to this mu'ásharat, in our homes and outside, with our own and with strangers. Khudá háfiz.

MALFÚZÁT

[Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه mentioned in one of his majális:]

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه used to say that he had stated the ádáb of the essence Sulúk in just two words: ittilá-o-ittibá' (informing and following). In other words, the muríd should keep on informing his sheikh of his condition, correctly and truthfully; and he should act on the methodology shown by the sheikh without entertaining any doubts and reservations.

If the above has been achieved, then it will be understood that the sálik is traversing the path of Sulúk with the proper etiquettes of Taríqat. Such a person will very quickly reach his destination.

However, if he acts contrary to the above rules – he hides some of his activities and inner states, and he mentions only those states which are praiseworthy so that his sheikh may be impressed with his honourable status, omitting to mention the bad aspects within him – for goodness' sake, how can such a person be successful? That person who wishes to impress his elders with his own greatness is a mutakabbir (arrogant person) of an extremely high degree! He may be a sálik in appearance, but, in reality, he is a hálik (one who is destroyed)! That is why all sálikín should be introspective and check: "Is there some defect in me or not?" If there is a defect, the sálik should ponder on ways of removing that defect.

[Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه mentioned in one of his majális:]

It appears in the Hadíth Sharíf that 'Abdulláh Bin 'Umar رضى الله تعالى عنه has narrated that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم used to perform his Tahajjud namáz during his journeys as well, even when his mount was moving, irrespective of the direction the mount was facing. From this Hadíth Sharíf the virtues of nawáfil become apparent as well. Even though namáz becomes shortened during journeys, nevertheless, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم did not curtail his nafl namáz.

The question arises: Would it not have been a good thing if namáz was completely forgiven during journeys and during illness? There would be great ease in this.

The answer to this is as follows: Namáz is that act which differentiates between ímán and kufr, so that namáz is now a symbol of one's ímán; and a symbol is portrayed in every situation. Thus, just as it is necessary to exhibit ímán in both the conditions of illness and being on a journey, it is necessary to exhibit the symbol of ímán in these two situations.

The second reason is that namáz is the means for creating and strengthening a link and bond with Alláh Ta'álá. And an increase in this ta'alluq is an objective in all situations. Admittedly, there is alleviation during journeys and in illness, where the form has changed, but the original has not been abrogated. The musáfir is ordered to perform only two rakats namáz instead of the normal four fardh. The sick have been given permission, should they not have the strength to stand, to sit and perform namáz; and if the sick do not have the strength to do this, then permission is granted for them to lie down and perform namáz, but the namáz should not be abandoned.

Besides the above, there is also another very subtle reason. It is the following: during an illness or a journey, the bandah is even more in need of turning towards Alláh Ta'álá. The musáfir has been distanced from his external powerbase, from his glory and splendour, from his tribe, family, wife and children, friends and relatives. In a similar manner, the sick person has lost his physical strength and his support and he thinks to himself that the time to meet his Creator and Cherisher is very close. So, in these

situations should one turn one's attention less to Alláh Ta'álá or more? The demand at this time is to be involved in more 'ibádat than at other times. However, because of infirmity and debility, ease and alleviation have been granted.

[Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه *mentioned in one of his majális:]*

Taqwá is a very elevated quality. Alláh Ta'álá orders us at a number of places in the Qur'án Sharíf to adopt taqwá. A person may perform namáz, keep fasts, give zakát and so forth – he may have all these to his credit, but if he has no taqwá, then all these are useless. The similarity of all 'ibádát is like medication and the similarity of taqwá is that to parhez (dietary restrictions).

There is a famous saying: "A 100 medicines are equal to one dietary parhez." Just as it is necessary in physical medicine to take medication and, simultaneously, abstain from certain foods, in a similar manner in order to cure a rúhání illness together with medication – that is, 'ibádát – it is necessary to make parhez – that is, adopt taqwá. And what does taqwá involve? It is merely to safeguard the tongue, safeguard the eyes, safeguard the ears and then see what happens – then see what núr springs forth in the heart!

BOOKLET NUMBER FIVE

Safar 1413- August 1992

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our sheikh, Hadhrat Masíhul-Ummat Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه and the du'ás of our readers, this fifth booklet is now ready. May Alláh Ta'álá cause us all to benefit continuously from the teachings of our sheikh.

One of the remarkable features of Hadhratjí's majális is that it caters for all those present. The needs of the mubtadí (the beginner) are seen to, as well as the needs of the muntahí (the accomplished). Therefore, from time to time, each majlis has to be read through thoroughly again. The reason is that, as the beginner progresses from stage to stage, points not fully comprehended initially now become clearer. When he first read a majlis, it was as a beginner and he would have attached importance to only those aspects that affected him directly. But now, as he progresses, other aspects will appear clearer to him and will now become relevant to him at this particular stage. This process continues until he reaches the level of the muntahí.

At this stage too, it will be necessary to look at some of the majális again as newer problems and challenges come to the fore. Even if a person has reached a stage where he remembers all the majális, then too it is necessary to keep on looking at the recommended kitábs from time to time.

What is the basis for this statement?

The following: one particular morning we entered the majliskhánah as usual and sat down. Hadhratjí commenced by taking the copy of "Hayaatul-Muslimeen" that was lying on his small desk and opened it at the page where he had placed a marker.

For our benefit, Hadhratjí commented that he had been looking at

the kitáb earlier on and had come across this interesting and important passage. But before reading the passage, Hadhratjí commented that this kitáb: “Hayaatul-Muslimeen” was such a kitáb that one should keep on glancing at it from time to time. The majlis that followed was based on the passage read out by Hadhratjí.

Similarly, the chapters on the akhláqe-razílah and akhláqe-hamídah in “Sharí’at and Tasawwuf” have to be read over and over again. (“Good Character” serves as an introduction to “Sharí’at and Tasawwuf” and it is also a handy reference book afterwards). Also of importance in one’s reading schedule is a kitáb on fiqh (mas’alah-masá’il). Hadhratjí recommends that one reads three to five masá’il daily.

It must be pointed out again that these booklets are not a substitute for direct contact with one’s sheikh. If for some reason one cannot contact one’s sheikh, one should at least try to be in contact with one of his khulafá.

This is the basic formula for progress: a schedule of learning and contact with one’s sheikh. By following this formula consistently, there is no reason why the reader will not progress from stage to stage and from strength to strength, in-shá-Alláh Ta’álá.
Dr.I.M.

[This is a translation of a majlis-e-khás held by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه*, in Jalálábád, India, on the 7th October 1989, corresponding with the 5th Rabi-ul Awwal 1410]*

TIJÁRAT – TRADE AND COMMERCE

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Despite listening to so many talks, some remain where they are. They make no progress. I do not know what their niyets are, but Alláh Ta’álá is well aware of niyets. Alláh Ta’álá then causes improvement in one’s character, what is termed isláh, according to this niyet. This process is called hidáyet

(guidance). Isláh and hidáyet thus depend on one's niyet.

What is the relevant áyet in the Qur'án Sharíf...?

إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَابِقَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

Verily, Alláh does not change the condition of a nation as long as they do not change what is within themselves. (S.13.11.)

This is quite plain and straightforward: Alláh Ta'álá changes the condition of a nation due to its own actions. Its pitiful condition is because it has brought on oppression (zulm) on itself. In another áyet Alláh Ta'álá states:

إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَّلٰكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ

Verily, Alláh does not oppress mankind in any way;, but human beings oppress themselves. (S.10.44.)

Guidance (hidáyet) and deviation (dhalálat)

This applies to an individual as well. When a person invites dhalálat, as shown by his conduct, then Alláh Ta'álá causes him to go astray. After all, Alláh Ta'álá is the Divine Original Cause of each and everything, even hidáyet and dhalálat.

Alláh Ta'álá states:

فَإِنَّ اللهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ

Alláh verily sends whom He will astray; and guides whom He wills. (S.35.8.)

This does NOT mean that Alláh Ta'álá gives guidance at random and that the individual has no choice in the matter. This is not the case. What it means is that, when a person adopts those means which lead to hidáyet, then Alláh Ta'álá, as the Prime Cause, leads him to hidáyet. And when a person adopts those means that lead to dhalálat, then Alláh Ta'álá allows him to go astray.

People tend to derive wrong meanings when looking at translations of the Qur'án Sharíf, Therefore, it is not permissible for people to look at translations of the Qur'án Sharíf without an ustád.

Looking at Qur'ánic translations and an overseas letter

I received a letter from overseas. It was either from Africa or from England. The letter was from a pious lady, punctual with her saum and salát, reciting the Qur'án Sharíf a lot, and so forth – all in all a very díndár person. The poor lady was lamenting about her husband, that he was not performing his namáz, that he was drinking, that he cast lustful glances at others.

She then wrote: "I was brought up in a well-bred Díní-conscious family and, Alhamdulilláh, there is díndárí in me. Then, how is it that I came to be landed with such a husband? Especially seeing that the Qur'án Sharíf states:

اَلْخَبِيْثٰتُ لِلْخَبِيْثِيْنَ وَالْخَبِيْثُوْنَ لِلْخَبِيْثٰتِ ۚ وَالطَّيِّبٰتُ لِلطَّيِّبِيْنَ وَالطَّيِّبُوْنَ لِلطَّيِّبٰتِ ۚ

Corrupt women are for corrupt men; and corrupt men for corrupt women.
Good women are for good men; and good men are for good women. (S.24.26.)

"This means that the khabís (wicked/ evil/ foul) are for the khabís and the tayyib (good/ pure/ chaste) are for the tayyib. I am no khabís, so how did I get such a husband?"

In reply, I wrote to the lady: "This is the very reason why it is not permissible to read the translation of the Qur'án Sharíf without an ustád! The correct interpretation of the áyet is as follows: If a man has a khabís-type temperament and he has a wife who is tayyib, díndár and pretty, nevertheless, his khabís temperament will draw him to a showy woman and a woman of the street. In a similar way, if a khabís wife has a husband who is good and pious, her khabís temperament will draw her to that man who is also khabís, one who is immoral and a profligate.

"But, má-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, in your situation you are díndár. How can you even think of yourself as khabís? That may be his temperament, but you yourself are pious, má-shá-Alláh Ta'álá."

One can see the error she fell into interpreting the áyet herself. That is why it is not permissible to read the translation of the Qur'án Sharíf without an ustád.

We were speaking of niyets. Isláh and hidáyet are dependent on one's niyet. Alláh Ta'álá is well aware of one's niyet. He then deals with

individuals accordingly. It is Therefore, important to safeguard one's niyet. For instance: What is one's niyet when associating with a buzurg?

The confidence trickster appearing pious

Different people have different attitudes, some of which are corrupt: for example, seeking jáh, or seeking mál. These individuals attempt to get something out of others by gaining their confidence so that people must come to believe: "He is connected to such and such a buzurg of such and such a place. Therefore, má-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, he must be a pious person himself." He wishes to deceive the people and deceive the sheikh.

The moment he sees that people consider him to be pious and upright, because he has made a point of being seen in the company of the pious, he puts his worldly ploy, the confidence trick, into action. He starts by taking a loan of twenty rúpís and he pays it back punctually. The cycle of borrowing and repaying punctually has started: sometimes he borrows a 100 rúpís and he pays it back; sometimes he borrows 500 rúpís and he pays this back. In this manner he establishes his trustworthiness. Má-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, he is somebody who pays back punctually and he is also somebody who associates with the pious. He has won the confidence of the people. He now borrows 10 thousand rúpís and he does NOT pay it back! The confidence trick has been brought to its successful completion.

I do not speak of incidents that have not taken place. This particular incident has been related from past experience.

If this is his niyet – to extort money from people by using a confidence trick – then it is obvious he can expect no benefit from Alláh Ta'álá, that he will get no hidáyet from Alláh Ta'álá. It is not Alláh Ta'álá who wants him to go astray. The áyet quoted just now does not mean that Alláh Ta'álá wants him to go astray. It is not Alláh Ta'álá's purpose to lead man astray: Alláh Ta'álá has revealed the Qur'án Sharíf; with specific laws and guidance, so that a person may come onto hidáyet.

Here is a thought: if Alláh Ta'álá wanted to lead man astray, why create Jannat? Jahannam alone would have sufficed! No. It is this person who has deliberately sought dhalálat by his wrong thoughts and beliefs and by his evil conduct. So, Alláh Ta'álá has caused him to deviate.

A parable about a person heading for a well

Here is an illustration: A person wishing to travel is lost. He does not know the way to his destination. A friend who knows the route is prepared to direct him. However, this person does not feel confident enough to go just by directions alone so the friend goes with him, pointing out the way and also pointing out the dangers.

After travelling only a short distance, the person interrupts and says: "I know the path now. I do not need you anymore." The friend holds his hand and says: "Wait! There is a well directly in front and you are heading straight for it!" The person says: "What well? There is no well. Leave my hand." Despite his friend's pleas, he forces his hand free and he walks blindly forward to fall into the well.

The question now is: Did the friend throw this person into the well?

The answer is: Obviously not! He himself had this strange desire to fall into the well. The friend was there to guide him and he tried to prevent him by actually holding him back. But the help was scorned. Such thick-headed people should really be given a shove from behind and be told: "Go! You desire to destroy yourself. Go! Fall in!" Obviously, we do not advise that you do this, but somebody who is malicious may just decide to do it!

What do we advise? The Shar'í injunction is very well stated in this Fársí couplet which states that if you see a blind person walking and he is heading directly for a well, it is your compulsory duty to save him. If you are making namáz even, interrupt your namáz and stop him. This is what Islám teaches. The poet says:

If I see a blind person heading towards a well
and I remain silent I am a sinner.

In this specific situation, one has now broken off one's namáz and one rushes forward and grabs the blind person's hand, thereby putting into practice what Islám teaches.

If the blind person becomes enraged and says: "Why are you catching my hand? Leave me alone!" one should explain nicely to him: "Brother, there is a well in front of you." If the blind person is still adamant and says: "Who are you to tell me? Leave my hand!" and he forces his hand free, then all one can say is: "As you wish," and leave him to his fate.

So, has he been thrown into the well or has he fallen in of his own free will? As we said: a malicious person may just decide to give him an extra shove from behind! Of course, no respectable person would ever think of doing such a nasty thing!

It is unthinkable that Alláh Ta'álá should cause a person to deviate from hidáyet and cause him to go astray. May Alláh Ta'álá save us from such thoughts! You have not understood the Qur'án Sharíf. The terminology of the Qur'án Sharíf is that of Royalty.

As stated already, what is meant is that the Primordial Cause of everything is Alláh Ta'álá. Honour and disgrace, guidance and deviation, are all in His Hands. However, whatever happens to us we invite by our niyets and a'mál. Should one fall into disgrace, or should one go astray, do not implicate Alláh Ta'álá – this is what you have brought on yourself. Alláh Ta'álá is free of all blame. That is why it is important to safeguard one's niyet. One's niyet should draw one towards good and one should make du'á: "O Alláh Ta'álá! Bless us all with hidáyet and grant us all maghfirat."

رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ ۞

My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of all who show mercy. (S.23.118.)

One's niyet is important. The benefit accruing to one will depend on one's niyet. People visiting a buzurg come with different niyets. Different objectives are concealed in the hearts of those sitting with a buzurg, developing an association with him and becoming bai'at to him. If one has the niyet to build a strong and firm bond with Alláh Ta'álá, then one will benefit.

If the niyet is to attain some worldly objective, then that person will still attain his materialistic objective. In the latter case, this person sets out to gain the confidence of the people by his association with a buzurg: He wishes to impress others by being a friend of the buzurg; or by being bai'at to him in the silsilah; or by showing others that he is of his progeny. Such a person will attain his worldly objectives, but his portion in the ákhirat will diminish proportionately. Yes, if he dies with ímán, he will

attain Jannat, but there is no question of his attaining Jannat in the first instance, immediately on dying.

This stands to reason: If all Muslims qualify to enter Jannat straight away on dying, what then is the purpose of making one responsible for the laws of the Sharí'at? Why is there punishment for acts of kufr and for crimes committed?

Why differentiate between Haqq and bátil? Why label those not obeying the Sharí'at as transgressors? There must be reasons for all this.

There is a difference between nafse-ímán and kámil-ímán

The answer is quite simple: ímán can either be simple ímán (nafse-ímán), or perfect ímán (kámil-ímán). Those with kámil-ímán will qualify for Jannat straight away. Those with nafse-ímán, ímán which is not perfect, will enter Jannat only after their punishment has been meted out.

Yes, as I was saying, a person who has worldly gain as his objective will achieve worldly gain. The qissah of the person posing as the son-in-law of Hají Imdádulláh رحمة الله عليه is well known to you. Did the impostor not achieve his objective? Yes, he did. But...!

Incidentally, this "But" is a particle of clarification (istidrák). You may have come across it when studying "Sharah-Maktah-Amil". It means: to clarify any doubt that has arisen in a preceding statement, in the statement that follows.

But remember, this person may gain from a worldly point of view, but he is losing much more as far as the ákhirat is concerned. He has in mind that he is making an effort to earn a living, what is termed "kasbe-dunyá". Now "kasb" means "to earn" and "dunyá" is made up of two specific components, namely "mál" and "jáh" (wealth and prestige). This person feels that what he is doing is within the confines of iktisábe-dunyá – earning a living.

Iktisábe-dunyá – a misconception clarified

What is the Islámic standpoint? Islám has made iktisábe-dunyá permissible on condition that there is no interference with iktisábe-ákhirat. In other words, if there is no harm to one's deeds and schedules (a'mál and mu'ámulát) for the ákhirat, then only is earning wealth and dunyá permissible. On the

other hand if, in seeking dunyá, there is interference with one's efforts and one's deeds and schedules for the ákhirat, then that earning is not permissible. It is clearly harám. This is the rule and principle. The basis of our existence has been interfered with. The basis of our existence is to make an effort for the ákhirat and that earning which interferes with this effort, is evil.

The relevant Hadíth Sharíf states:

اَلدُّنْيَا مَزْرَعَةُ ٱلْاٰخِرَةِ

This world is the cultivation ground for the ákhirat.

In other words, give priority to the works and deeds for the ákhirat. Do not do any such thing that will interfere with the deeds for the ákhirat.

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has said:

طَلَبُ كَسْبِ الْحَلَالِ فَرِيْضَةٌ بَعْدَ الْفَرِيْضَةِ

To earn dunyá is fardh, but only after performing the fardh

(for the ákhirat).

This is the rule and the principle. But what is the present situation? We see the farmer getting up in the morning and going straight to his farm; the businessman gets up and goes straight to his shop; the worker gets up and goes straight to the office or factory; the student gets up and goes straight to the classroom; and so forth. Not a single one has performed his namáz!

What each one should have been doing is the following: After getting up and freeing himself from the call of nature, he should have made wudhú and gone to make namáz with jamá'at with takbíre-ulá. Then only should he have proceeded to his work.

Alláh Ta'álá Himself has said:

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلٰوةُ فَانْتَشِرُوْافِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللهِ

And when the prayer has ended, then disperse in the earth and seek the bounty of Alláh; and remember Alláh in abundance so that you may be successful. (S.62.10.)

Meaning that, when you have completed your namáz, do not stay put in the masjid. Spread out on the earth.

For what? To go to the cinema? To watch television?

Television spreads shamelessness and reinforces the roots of apostasy

Television is to be found everywhere today: in public places, on business premises, in virtually every home – at times, not only one, but two and three. These have been placed ideally to spread shamelessness and to reinforce the roots of apostasy, to lead one astray. Television does not harm others as much as it does the Muslim. Others have already reached the pinnacle of their destruction: here they die and there they fall! Jahannam is the immediate fate they face, compulsory for those who die with kufr.

No! The damage and harm is to the Muslim and mu'min. But our mu'min brothers refuse to understand. Therefore, our destruction is progressing headlong. The cinema and television are excellent avenues wherein the destruction of the Muslim is being propagated. Without having to say anything directly, the destruction of the Muslim is under progress.

The cinema and television are a big fitnah (evil/ corruption), in the same way that it is a fitnah – and a great fitnah at that – for young lads to keep company with other young lads. It is a great fitnah for youths to mix with other youths!

So, having made namáz, should one leave the masjid for these activities? No! Never! Your namáz forbids you: "Hold on! Hold on! Just a little while ago you were standing and talking with One Who is Most Exalted, Most Honoured. On your lips was His Sublime and Respected Name. You bowed your back respectfully in front of Him. You rubbed your forehead on the ground in great humility, in front of Him. You sat in front of Him, head bent down, with your heart burning with love for Him. And now you have just moved a few steps away from there. To sit in the cinema and to watch television? And to go around goggling lecherously at young boys and women? And to look with contempt at others? And to swear and use foul language? And to argue and scream? And to be involved in indecent and forbidden acts? Are these the demands of that noble and honourable namáz?"

No! “Fantashirú-fil-ardh” does not mean all this! What then?

Alláh Ta’álá is saying: Spread out on the earth to seek the fadhl of Alláh.

Spread out to seek the fadhl of Alláh Ta’álá

This sounds strange. To seek the fadhl of Alláh Ta’álá was the very reason that you had gone to the masjid. You were sitting in the masjid to seek the pleasure of Alláh Ta’álá.

You had obviously gone to seek the pleasure of Alláh Ta’álá and not His displeasure. Al-’ayaz-billáh! How can one even think that one goes to the masjid to seek the displeasure of Alláh Ta’álá? This is a fine point being brought to your notice, a point you may not find in the kitábs of tafsír.

Another fine point to bring to your notice: The Arabic “fi” is used here and “fi” means “in”. “Spread out IN the earth.” Grammatically the word “alá” meaning “on,” would appear to be more appropriate. However, the “fi” is used in this instance for greater emphasis: Spread out firmly and enthusiastically on the earth.

O you students! O you ’ulemá-e-ikram! Hearken! These are points you may or may not come across when perusing the kitábs of tafsír.

But, let us carry on: Spread out for what? To seek the pleasure of Alláh Ta’álá. “Wabtagú-min-fadhlilláh.” – Spread out to seek the fadhl of Alláh Ta’álá.

So, the question arises: “O Alláh! We were sitting in the masjid specifically seeking your fadhl. Tell us, what is this other fadhl that we are being ordered to seek?”

The answer is: This fadhl is your rozí. Fadhl, in this instance, is your rizq.

You were under the impression that being in the masjid, engaged in your namáz, your tiláwat and your tasbíh, was the only means of attaining His fadhl. Not at all. Spreading out on the earth, travelling and toiling, is also seeking the fadhl of Alláh Ta’álá. This is also ’ibádat. So, go forth. Seek your sustenance. “Wabtagú-min-fadhlilláh.”

Another question: Why this unusual manner of ordering us to seek our sustenance?

Alláh Ta'álá's answer is: "It must not happen that you seek your rizq forgetful of Me! It must not happen that you immerse yourself in your farming, or your business, or whatever work you are doing, forgetful of Me! And, moreover, that whatever you earn you come to consider to be the result solely of your own toil and efforts. Remember that even the results are through My fadhl, as well as the means: It is I Who have blessed you with an understanding heart and a brain that can think and limbs that can work. Have you not stopped to think why the next person has not got what you have? So, is this not My fadhl on you?"

Yet, you consider that what you have earned is solely through your rushing around, through your own efforts, Just like Qárún.

Qárún believed that it was solely through his own knowledge and skills that he had amassed his wealth. Qárún had boasted: "What I have amassed is solely through my own knowledge and expertise. I have taken no help or support, neither from any person nor from that Being Whom you refer to as your Kháliq."

"Believe as you wish," was Alláh Ta'álá's response. What happened? Alláh Ta'álá's wrath descended and both Qárún and his wealth were destroyed.

Remember, not a single item that we possess is ours. Nay, we ourselves cannot lay a claim to ourselves! We belong to another Being. And if we belong to another Being, it follows that whatever we have in our possession also belongs to that Being.

Do you understand?

Possessing excellence is from Alláh Ta'álá

In other words: The moment a right-thinking person with clear understanding can absorb this concept, he will never develop takabbur. No matter how much external excellence he may have achieved, whether it is materially in the form of wealth, or physically in the form of bodily strength, or politically in the form of kingship over a land or support of the masses, he will never be boastful or proud or arrogant.

The excellence that he has attained may not be in záhirí qualities, but may be in bátiní qualities – the person may have achieved excellence in the field of 'ilm and in a'mál, in taqwá, zuhd and 'ibádat – then too that person

with clear understanding will never be boastful or proud or arrogant.

That is why the ahlulláh, the real ahlulláh, do not have even a trace of takabbur. This is because they realise and accept that everything is from that Being. The ahlulláh understand very well that Haqq Ta'álá is the Musabbab-al-asbáb – that Alláh Ta'álá is the Cause of all causes. They, thus, attribute all good to Alláh Ta'álá and never impute that good to any excellence within themselves. They recognise all good attributes to be gifts from Alláh Ta'álá and are ever fearful: "It must not happen that this gift is snatched away!"

That is why they abstain from any such speech, any such action, any such deed, any such work that may incur even an atom's displeasure from Alláh Ta'álá, fearing that this may be the cause for that Divine gift to be snatched away.

Do you understand?

At times, it may happen that a particular excellence is temporarily taken away. However, this is not always due to some fault on the part of the ahlulláh, but the reason for it is to draw the person even closer. Alláh Ta'álá desires that this person should direct his attention more fully on Him. Not for a moment should this person's gaze drift to himself and his achievements, but his gaze should be fixed on Alláh Ta'álá even more closely and completely, by an even greater realisation that He is the Bestower of all gifts.

Hadhratwálá's mind going blank

Hadhratwálá related the following incident to us:

He was invited to Pákka-gharí, obviously with the object of his giving a wáz. When the time came, he proceeded to the mimbar and sat down. He read the preliminary khutbah, then recited the introductory áyet and then... stopped. No topic came to mind – his mind was a complete blank! He repeated the same áyet several times, hoping that some topic would come to mind – but still a complete blank!

He then thought to himself: "I don't have to speak on a new topic. I have given scores of lectures before and I will just repeat one of those." But try with all his might, yet he could not recall a single lecture. Finally, he said:

"At this moment no topic comes to mind. There will be no lecture." So saying, he climbed off the mimbar and sat down.

This incident illustrates what we have been discussing. I do not have to spell out to you the vastness of Hadhratwálá's knowledge or the high Díní status that he had attained. Yet, on that occasion, his mind had gone completely blank. At that moment his qúwate-'ilmiyah was snatched away temporarily, through no fault of his. Alláh Ta'álá desires to draw some kámilín and akmilín even closer. They are already clasped to His breast – He wishes to hold them there!

Do you understand?

It is not já'iz to be proud or boastful of any excellence that one may possess.

That excellence is not self-generated: it is a gift from Alláh Ta'álá. If such a gift can be snatched away without a person transgressing, what chances are there that that gift will remain if one deliberately does wrong? The fear of a decline in that excellence should be ever present.

Yet, what do we see happening? A person attains some wealth and it goes to his head. The very next thing he does is squander it heedlessly. Soon it is all gone and he goes around borrowing from others. He has neither the capacity to be contented with very little (qaná'at), nor is he capable of spending cautiously. He should have had some forethought. But no, the wedding has to be lavish and so too the occasion of his son's circumcision and 'aqíqah. So, now he has to go around borrowing.

Wrong practices in regard to mangní, khatnah and 'aqíqah

Not only that, but nowadays even on the occasion of the betrothal (mangní), there is unnecessary spending. You find that both parties have already had a discussion and have agreed on the marriage. But that does not satisfy everybody. So, 50 or a 100 people must be invited and fed and entertained.

This happens. As I have said before, I do not mention incidents that have not actually taken place. These incidents are not imaginary.

Just a few days ago a person came and related what I have just said. I questioned him: "When the girl's side gave the answer, they had called

a few people from the boy's side? Obviously, just one person will not go alone."

He said: "Yes. Four to six people had gone to get the answer." The answer was given and confirmed. Yet it was found necessary to gather 50 to a 100 people for meals to re-confirm the agreement.

Please do not take offence, but let me tell you something: The truth is that a Muslim has lost trust and confidence (i'tibár) in his fellow Muslim. Why do I say this? You can see for yourself that, even after the agreement is made, it is still necessary to hold a special function to re-confirm the agreement.

So, the mangní, the wedding, the khatnah and the 'aqíqah, have all become major functions. Yes, even the circumcision and 'aqíqah have assumed the proportions of a wedding!

'Aqíqah, done along Shar'í lines, is a simple procedure: The day the child is seven days old, the hair on the head has to be shaved and silver has to be given to the poor as sadqah. The amount of silver will be equivalent to the weight of the hair shaved off. That is, if you have the means. Also, if you have the means, slaughter one goat if the infant is female and two goats if the infant is male. Then, like the meat of qurbání, it is preferable to divide this meat into three portions: one portion to be kept for one's own use, one to be distributed to the poor and the third portion to be distributed to friends and family. Plain and simple.

But no! 50 to a 100 people must be invited. So, besides the 'aqíqah animal, an additional cow or two have to be slaughtered as well to feast friends and relatives!

What about the khatnah? The Sharí'at does not stipulate a special function on this occasion. This simple rite does not satisfy everybody. So, one finds the child being painted and dolled up in new clothes. A special horse is hired and the child is paraded around the neighbourhood on the horse. Thereafter, the circumcision is performed and everybody is then feasted. Is this not on the scale of a weddings? Is this a union (wedding) they are celebrating? This is no union, but a separation – the separation of the foreskin! How strange!

When all the money is finished, he goes around borrowing. Nowadays,

this borrowing is in the form of a loan from the bank on interest. And when the creditors demand their money, the requests come: "Hadhratjí, please make du'á for me. I am piled up in debt." When I ask how it happened, then all the details come out. That is how I come to know.

Now, the question is: Did Alláh Ta'álá command him to get into this plight or did he bring it on himself? Obviously, he brought it on himself. Alláh Ta'álá tried to prevent his getting into trouble. Alláh Ta'álá forbade him from wasting his wealth and from taking loans on interest.

A Hadíth Sharíf of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم states:

اِنَّ اللهَ كَرِّهَ لَكُمْ ثَلاَثًا قِيْلَ وَ قَالَ وَ اِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ

Very, Alláh Ta'álá has disapproved three acts for you: to argue and debate, to squander your wealth and to question too much.

These are important matters brought to your attention. It is very necessary that our brothers should know how to live with respect and honour and how to save themselves from disgrace.

Let us continue. Alláh Ta'álá says:

فَانْتَشِرُوْا فِي الْأَرْضِوَابْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللهِ

Alláh Ta'álá's fadhl is in the masjid as well, but, O Performers of namáz, leave the masjid after performing your namáz and spread out on the earth to seek your rozí. This is also Alláh Ta'álá's fadhl.

Álime-asbáb – success depends on using the correct means

Another point to be understood from this áyet is that this world is a world of means – álime-asbáb: a world related to the utilisation of means to attain a desired objective. In other words, we have to make firm use of the proper and permissible means that Alláh Ta'álá has set out to acquire those objectives which are considered necessary. And, thereafter, have hope of success.

As we said, coming to the masjid for namáz is seeking fadhle-Iláhí. Spreading out on the earth for your rozí, is also seeking fadhle-Iláhí. Look at it this way: In order to seek your rozí your feet have to walk, your hands have to work and your eyes have to see that work.

These actions of your feet, hands and eyes have a significance no less than the actions of your feet, hands and eyes in going to the masjid and performing your namáz! In both situations, the movements of your feet, hands and eyes are to gain the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá. In both situations you are in 'ibádat and earning a great reward – thawáb and ajr-azím.

Another very subtle point arises here: In both situations, whatever you are earning is only through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá. Do not even for a moment consider that what you have earned is due to any excellence within yourself! The walking of your feet, the working of your hands, the looking of your eyes and the speaking of your tongue, are all through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá. Do not for a moment consider these to be due to any excellence within you, or that any excellence within you is the result solely of your own toil and effort. Whatever scholarly accomplishments you may have or excellence as far as 'ibádat or taqwá is concerned, do not for a moment think that they are the results of your independent efforts.

We can thus summarise what we have said as follows: Alláh Ta'álá says: "In every situation keep your gaze fixed on Me!" Turn your gaze away from yourself and direct your gaze towards Alláh Ta'álá.

Fanáyet and faná-al-faná explained

When you have reached this stage, you have reached the stage called faná'yet.

This is the stage where there is complete annihilation of the nafs. So much so that, irrespective of any excellence and perfection attained with regard to health and strength, wealth, knowledge, good deeds, treasures or territorial gains, one's gaze is on none of these, but is fixed solely on Alláh Ta'álá. One has submerged into non-existence. One has made oneself into dust – mitá'yet.

When this person progresses further and reaches a stage where he is not aware even of his own annihilation (faná'yet), he reaches a stage called faná-al-faná – annihilation of annihilation.

Do you understand these terms now? Many are confused about these terms. Please remember: Faná (annihilation) does not mean to go and cut your throat! Committing suicide is a terrible sin which will land one in

Jahannam.

Faná is that condition where you have separated and isolated your nafs from yourself, so that its opposition ceases completely. Remember that your nafs is the main culprit in an alliance of mischief-makers. Your nafs is the king who has taken Shaitán as wazír and an accomplice. These two – Bádsháh Nafs and Wazír Shaitán – scheme together to teach one to oppose the orders of Alláh Ta'álá. Fanáyet is that stage where the opposition of this duet, Bádsháh Nafs and Wazír Shaitán, ceases completely and only the Pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá remains!

So, how does one reach this stage?

Simply, as follows: Before you say anything, or do anything, think carefully and ask yourself quite honestly: "Will this bring the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá or not?" Only if you can gain the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá, speak or act. If the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá cannot be gained, abstain! You have, in this simple way, attained faná'yet. This is the haqíqat of faná.

When you go back home, you will be taking with you this faná'yet. This is why you have come here – to attain faná'yet.

Let us continue. "Wabtagú-min-fadhlilláh." In every situation there is the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá.

Answer to a criticism that molvís want us to stay put in a masjid

This brings out another important point: This is an answer to those Muslims who level the criticism at the molvís that they only want us to stay put in the masjid.

Think for yourself: How can any molví say this when Alláh Ta'álá has specifically commanded that, after having completed one's namáz, one should spread out on the earth to seek one's rizq? Is it possible for a molví to contradict Alláh Ta'álá? Obviously not.

Yes, a self-styled, "itinerant molví" may make such a statement. A self-styled, "itinerant molví" is one who has looked up some kitábs at home without a proper ustád. He is no "molví" – he is no "maulá-wálá" (one connected to Alláh Ta'álá). On the contrary, he is a "murlí-wálá" – he is a turnip!

Yes, such a charlatan can be mistaken for a molví.

For example: You may find that a person has memorised long and involved lectures on the theme of "Sírat-un-Nabí" and he has practiced very hard to deliver them with great oratory. His oratory absolutely moves the audience. At times, they are rolling with laughter; at times, they cannot hold back tears from rolling down their cheeks. The n'ats are also recited with a superb voice.

"Wáh! Wáh!" The audience is charmed, nay, the audience is absolutely captivated! But the moment he leaves the listeners are as before. Some are enjoying tea and refreshments; others are busy serving sharbat; others are passing the time in their tents; others are conducting their own amusing gatherings; while others are busy sight-seeing and window-shopping.

What a tremendously successful occasion! According to his niyet, each one has achieved his objective. The hosts have received their share of the adulation for inviting the speakers; those in charge of the arrangements have received their praise for good organisation; the speakers and reciters of n'ats have been congratulated on their superb oratory and recitals; of course, these have also been reimbursed for their travelling expenses and they have also received handsome hand-outs, depending on the financial status of the hosts; and that person who has shredded his kurtah in a fit of passion, has not been forgotten – he has been given a new kurtah!

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّات

Verily, deeds depend on niyets.

Each individual will be rewarded according to his niyet

The purpose of a wáz is for Díní benefit, that the hearts of the people be turned away from dunyá and be instilled with a yearning for the ákhirat. If this is not achieved, of what value is all that praise and congratulations?

So, a real molví – not a self-styled molví – can never say: "Brother, after your namáz, stay put and do not leave the masjid," when the Maulá is saying: "After your namáz, spread out on the earth to seek your rizq". May Alláh Ta'álá forgive the critics for their slander.

"Wabtagú-min-fadhlilláh" – seek the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá. Now, what is

the characteristic of seeking the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá? This is stated in the words that follow:

وَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ۝

And remember Alláh Ta'álá in abundance.

The essence of wazkurulláha-kathíran

Alláh Ta'álá is saying: "You should understand that the rozí you are earning is My fadhl. But do not be so involved in your work that you forget Me. It should not happen that you earn indiscriminately, not taking into account what is já'iz and what is ná-já'iz, what is halál and what is harám. I had ordered you to seek My fadhl. So, how can such indiscriminately earned rozí be considered to be My fadhl? Moreover, when the time of the next namáz arrives, do not be so involved in earning that you do not remember even to perform your namáz. Do not let this happen!" This is what Alláh Ta'álá is saying in the phrase "wazkurulláha-kathíran". Keep remembering Alláh Ta'álá.

Here is a question: Is the act of remembrance (yád) a function of the lips or the heart? Obviously, the heart is the seat of remembrance, whereas the lips only express His Name. So, what Alláh Ta'álá is saying, is: "O Mu'mins! O Mussallís! O Performers of namáz! When you set out to seek My fadhl, when you set out to seek your rozí, do not become so involved that you do not remember Me in your hearts. Remember Me in your hearts, not in a cursory manner, but in abundance. The object of this remembrance should be that you are acutely aware of what is halál and what is harám, of what is já'iz and what is ná-já'iz, of what causes grief to others and what brings happiness, of what causes harm to others and what brings comfort and ease. This is the way to earn your rizq, by remembering Me in abundance in your hearts."

Do you understand? By the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá, the áyet of the Qur'án Sharíf is being expounded.

"Kathíran" – in abundance. This will only become possible if your namáz is also performed in abundance. That is, when you continuously perform

all your namáz at their proper times and in the proper manner, observing all the ádábs with proper care.

Deeper aspects of namáz: namáz is zikr from beginning to end

Namáz is a composite zikr from beginning to end, having takbír, tahmíd, tasbíh and other zikr in a specialised form.

Also when you commence your namáz, do you not lift your hands to your ears? With this motion you are taking dunyá out of your heart and, with the back of your hands, throwing dunyá behind your back. You are signifying: "From this moment onwards I am taking the love of dunyá, and any connection with it, out of my heart and pushing these behind me."

This act has a deeper significance: You are demonstrating the practical side of "Lá-iláha-illal-láh," – the negation of all deities except Alláh, referred to as "nafí-athbát". So that, by the motion of your hands, you are throwing all the deities inherent in "dunyá" out of your heart and behind you, pronouncing simultaneously "Alláhu-Akbar".

You then fold your hands, the right over the left, placing them just below the navel. The latífah-e-nafs – the focal point where the nafs is situated – is below the navel. By firmly folding your hands below the navel, you are telling yourself: "I am now holding firmly onto my nafs so that dunyá, which I have just now thrown behind me, should not surreptitiously come back."

Yes, learn how to make namáz. These are aspects to understand and inculcate within oneself.

You have recited the takbír, Alláhu-Akbar. Now you recite the tasbíh, subhánal-láh. Then follows the tahmíd:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ ۝

Praise be to Alláh, Lord of the worlds.

When one addresses somebody important and one has a request to make, it is only appropriate to commence with words of respect. Is this not what you do when writing a letter of request to some important person? Similarly, when speaking to Alláhu-subhánahu-wa-Ta'álá, we start with

takbír and tasbíh and tahmíd.

Before the actual request, we first set forth the Majestic Status of our Sustainer. We Therefore, say:

الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ۙ﴿﴾ مٰلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿﴾

Most beneficent, most merciful. Master of the Day of Judgement.

Then comes an affirmation which is followed by a statement of our complete dependence on Him:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِيْنُ ﴿﴾

Only You do we worship. (That is, we are seeking Your pleasure). (Only) You do we ask for help.

In these words we are saying: "The lifting of our hands and the throwing of dunyá behind us, the folding of our hands, the words of takbír, tasbíh and tahmíd that issued from our lips, were only possible through Your aid and assistance. Without Your continuous support we would not be able to make any 'ibádat."

Some points with regard to the use of "we"

There are some 'ulemá and tulebá present who will appreciate the following subtle points:

In the phrase "íyákana'budu" the plural "na" is used, meaning: "Only You do we worship." The question to ask is: Why is the singular "I" not used?

Point number one: When performing namáz with jamá'at, the imám is reciting on behalf of all those standing behind him. The "we" is a collective plea on behalf of all those who are present.

However, even when making namáz by oneself, one still says" we". Why?

That brings me to the second point: That human performing namáz by himself is not solitary. There is a rúh attached to a physical body. This physical body, in turn, is not a single entity, but is comprised of head and trunk, hands and feet, eyes, ears, heart, lungs and so forth. This physical body is covered by clothes – clothes bought with his money – so that his

wealth is attached to him. Thus, the "we" is pronounced on behalf of all the different parts of his body, his rúh and his wealth, all being involved in the 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá.

This servant is thus presenting this collective whole in front of Alláh Ta'álá, from head to foot, what is záhir and what is bátin. He is making the 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá with this whole entity. He is saying: "O Alláh! This body is a mere shell and the namáz of this mere shell would be meaningless. O Alláh! The plea is, therefore, on behalf of the composite whole. O Alláh! This is no ordinary task. Only with Your aid and continuous support can this 'ibádat be correct in all its záhirí and bátiní aspects."

These are the preliminary statements made by the servant. The actual request is still to come. The grandeur of the request is such, that it demands such a magnificent introduction. And what is the request?

The request

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ۙ صِرَاطَ الَّذِيْنَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّآلِّيْنَ ۧ

Show us the straight path. The path of those whom You have favoured; not (the path) of those who earn Your anger, and not of those who go astray. Ámín. (S.1.1-7.)

He is saying: "O Alláh! I need to tread on the straight path, the path that is completely straight and absolutely perfect – the sirátul-mustaqím! Keep me firm and steadfast on it. Let me not stagger, let me not stray, neither to the left, nor to the right. Keep me wholly on it, so that my eyes do not look at any wrong, my tongue does not speak any wrong, my ears do not listen to any wrong, my heart does not harbour any wrong, my hands do no wrong and my feet do no wrong."

He is asking for such steadfastness that he does not have to stop and think – automatically all the functions of his body will be free from wrongdoing. His heart should be so thoroughly conditioned that he walks on this path freely and naturally.

He continues: "O Alláh! There are many who claim to be on the straight

path, the sirátul-mustaqím. However, my request is special. I desire the sirátul-mustaqím of those who have already received Your blessings, those blessings connected with Your pleasure."

Who are these special persons who are of the "an'amta-alayhim"?

Elsewhere in the Qur'án Sharíf Alláh Ta'álá has mentioned them as being:

مِّنَ النَّبِيِّنَ وَالصِّدِّيْقِيْنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ۚ

Of the Ambiyá and the siddiqín and the martyrs and the righteous. (S.4.69.)

Those on whom the ne'mats of Alláh Ta'álá are showered are the Ambiyá, the siddiqín, the shuhadá' and the sálihín.

"O Alláh! This is the sirátul-mustaqím I am requesting. And I am specifically rejecting the path of those who also claim to be on the straight path, but who earn Your anger (the Yahúd) and who are astray (the Nasárá and Mushrik). No. Not the path of these. My request is for the path of those who earn Your ne'mats."

Having made his request, he himself says: "Ámín" – Qabúl! Accepted!

Have you understood? Have you now learnt how to make namáz, or not yet?

Ímán has been established. When you make 'ibádat in this manner, with this mental approach – whether this attitude is maintained afterwards or not – at that moment you have established ímán. You have attained ikhlás.

Wehm – unnecessary doubts

Those súfís with meticulous personalities, however, have unnecessary doubts instilled in them by Shaitán. Shaitán troubles them considerably, especially in regard to two aspects of the Dín.

FIRSTLY: Záhirí pákí and *ná-pákí* – external purity and impurity. That is, purity of clothes, body, and so forth. And correctness of wudhú and ghusl.

SECONDLY: Bátiní pákí and *ná-pákí* – internal purity and impurity. That is, purity of intention, namely ikhlás and riyá.

Záhirí pákí/ ná-pákí: Here is an example from the first category, external purity:

Some blood falls on the clothes. This person washes the clothes thoroughly, but the stain of the blood remains. In order to remove the stain, he washes the garment again and again. The stain is rubbed and scraped. But the stain is such that it does not go away. This person thinks that his garment is still ná-pák. Must the stain now be cut out to get the garment pák? Mind you, that was the order that Alláh Ta'álá gave the previous ummats, that the ná-pákí on a garment should be cut out and discarded in order to achieve pákí.

Alláh Ta'álá's mercy on the ummat

But look at the mercy of Alláh Ta'álá. You are the ummat of His Habíb Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم and for you the instructions are changed: "You are not to cut out the ná-pákí, but wash it with water three times and the garment will be pák, whether the stain remains or not. By doing it your way, are you not trying to fulfil your whims and fancies contrary to My orders? Are you trying to confront the Sharí'at with your personal prejudices?

"That would be an indirect criticism of Me! Is this the way you value My mercy on you? I could have left the original command that the ná-pákí should be cut out, but My mercy on you is such that you need only wash out the ná-pákí three times. The garment is now pák. If the stain remains, leave it! Go and perform your namáz."

You can see how Shaitán presents himself to oppose Rahmán and prevents this person from performing his namáz with jamá'at.

Another example:

Sufi Sáhib is in the toilet where he has just passed urine. But his istinjá does not come to an end. He uses jug upon jug of water to wash himself, but still he is not satisfied about his pákí. In the meantime, the jamá'at namáz in the masjid has also ended, but here this poor fellow is still busy washing himself.

These súfí-type temperaments have no doubts when it comes to halál and harám – these are clear-cut to them – and they abstain from anything harám and doubtful. Their rozí is halál tayyib. It is in connection with pákí/

ná-pákí that they encounter major problems.

Here follows another example. Please note that these examples are actual incidents. As I have said before, only actual incidents are related to you.

There was a ra'ís. He was a muttaqí, very conscientious about his Dín. He made ghusl, got dressed and came out of the bathroom. He sat down. Now the doubts came. He summoned the servant and ordered him to prepare the water again. He then went and made ghusl again, got dressed in another set of clean clothes and came out again. Again the doubts came. Once more he summoned the servant to prepare the water and again he went to make ghusl. This happened several times.

What was the doubt troubling him? We have noted already that this person had taqwá and he had ikhlás. However, he was over-conscientious and his mind reasoned as follows: "When making ghusl, water splashed on the walls. Most probably some droplets splashed back onto me and I became ná-pák and when I got dressed my clothes were also contaminated with these droplets. So, I have to make ghusl again and put on another set of clean clothes."

When making wudhú, he would be so doubtful of its being correct that he would use several large lotás of water before he was finally satisfied. Doubts came into his mind and troubled him with childish obstinacy.

When he came to Thánah Bhawan (to the khánqáh) and listened to Hadhratwálá's discourses, all these needless doubts disappeared. A small lotá of water was sufficient for his wudhú. Also, having made ghusl once, he did not unnecessarily repeat the ghusl a second and a third time. His troublesome doubts had vanished.

Bátiní pákí/ ná-pákí: These súfí-types are troubled by unnecessary doubts concerning not only záhirí pákí and ná-pákí, examples of which have been given above, but also concerning bátiní pákí and ná-pákí, namely ikhlás and its opposite, riyá. They constantly search within themselves to detect any change in their ikhlás. They become very distraught and are greatly disturbed by the doubt that they are directing their thoughts towards the creation and not the Creator. Has the ikhlás not changed into riyá?

For example: "I was making namáz and went into rukú' and then made sajdah with great concentration, when somebody came by and stood

looking at me. Has his presence not changed my intention and riyá come into me?"

Another example: "I was making zikr. Somebody who was passing by decided to sit and watch me make zikr. With him watching me, did I not now develop riyá?"

Another example: "I was making tiláwat of the Qur'án Sharíf in a very sweet-sounding voice. Somebody came by and stopped to listen. With him as an audience, did I not now develop riyá?"

Another example: "I was in a quiet corner, my head bowed down in yád-e-Iláhí and making zikr softly (zikr-e-khafí), when somebody noticed me. Did he not now get the false impression that I had ascended to the Arsh?"

This "riyá" is now everywhere. It intrudes in his namáz, in his tiláwat, in his zikr-e-jalí, in his zikr khafí, and this is upsetting him tremendously. This apparent internal ná-pákí of riyá, this apparent show when the gaze of the creation falls on him, is now contaminating his every ibádat.

Why so? The reason why such thoughts are upsetting him is that he has not sat in the company of some muhaqqiq in order to learn about the haqíqat of riyá and ikhlás. The moment he understands what riyá really is, his mind will have overcome this obstacle and he will be left with ikhlás alone. There will not be even a trace of riyá. So, it is necessary to understand the reality of ikhlás and riyá.

Haqíqat of ikhlás and riyá

The haqíqat is as follows: Both ikhlás and riyá are ikhtiyárí. We can choose one or the other. The order given to us is to develop ikhlás and eliminate riyá. Whatever we have been ordered to do is always something that is within our choice and power (ikhtiyár). Therefore, it follows that attaining ikhlás is ikhtiyárí and eliminating riyá is also ikhtiyárí – we have the choice and power to do both.

Now, how do we proceed?

As follows: Look at your niyet – your heartfelt intention and resolve – over which you have full ikhtiyár.

Ask yourself: "Was it my niyet to gain the honour and esteem of the creation, to engender in the hearts of the creation my greatness, to impress

them with my piety so that all these now become the means for my amassing wealth from them? Also, that they should now look at me with awe and become my devotees and kiss my hands and fall at my feet?"

Was this your niyet or not?

You are now in deep thought. You then reply: "Hadhrat, having given it thought and after listening to your explanation, I can quite confidently say that none of these objectives was intended by me."

That being the case, that none of these objectives was in your niyet, then there is absolutely no question of there being riyá!

Let us go a step further. Listen carefully now! None of these other objectives was in your niyet. But, at that moment, you were not consciously aware that your niyet was to attain the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá, even then there is no riyá – you have still attained ridhá-e-Iláhí, the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá.

O you súfíyá-e-ikrám, has riyá now gone or not?

[A loud "YES" came from those present.]

You are terrified for nothing. You should now have peace of mind. By the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of Hadhratwálá, the topic of ikhlás and riyá has been elucidated for you.

Let me put it together for you again: riyá results from a definite niyet. If riyá is absent, then its opposite, ikhlás, is present. The two cannot co-exist and neither can both be absent. If the one is absent, its opposite is present. Thus, if riyá is not there, then ikhlás is present, even though at that particular moment you are not aware of making a specific intention of attaining the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá.

Yes, it is a different matter if, by your ikhtiyár, you have the definite niyet of ridhá-e-Iláhí in mind as well. This stage is higher and superior (a'lá-wa-afzal). Merely having no riyá is the lowest stage of ikhlás, but it need not be scorned, because eliminating riyá becomes the means of attaining ikhlás. Just like a light-bulb is the means by which light radiates, Similarly, eliminating riyá is the means of allowing the radiance of ikhlás to manifest itself. This ikhlás can then be developed to its highest form.

These are thoughts which this faqír is presenting to you. May Alláh Ta'álá make it that we may all understand.

You have come here for your isláh. It is now a matter of being firm and resolute, so that you can tread the path of isláh with an even temperament (mustaqil-mízáj). Many are the ones who come here, but coming here is one thing and attaining one's objective is another. Attainment is dependent on treading the path correctly.

Attaining one's objective

To continue: This topic arose in the course of discussing the áyet:

وَابْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللهَ كَثِيْرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ۝

And seek the bounty of Alláh; and remember Alláh in abundance so that you may be successful. (S.62.10.)

Bear in mind what has just been discussed concerning riyá and ikhlás. Now, when this person sets out to seek his rozí – the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá – he may not have the awareness of Alláh Ta'álá in his heart, but he stays away from harám, his earnings are halál; he stays away from ná-já'iz, his rozí is já'iz. His objective has been attained. That is, he abstained from harám and ná-já'iz, he avoided illegal possession of others' wealth and he took care not to cause inconvenience and grief to others and he did not hurt their feelings. The thought of Alláh Ta'álá and attaining the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá, may or may not have been present in his heart at that time, but he has attained ikhlás – he has attained ridhá-e-Iláhí

He has attained his objective, which was to follow the orders of Alláh Ta'álá. The means to this objective was to have the remembrance of Alláh Ta'álá (yád-e-Iláhí) in his heart, intentionally and consciously and to maintain this remembrance: "Zikran-kathírin" was the means. Whether the yád-e-Iláhí remains subsequently in his heart or not, is secondary: one has to see primarily whether one's actions will earn the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá or not.

Do you understand?

The zikr is a means to an end. To be in zikr all the time is not an end in itself. If unbroken zikr-e-lisání and yád-e-Iláhí were ends in themselves, then all Muslims would be sinners, because this task is not possible. The

objective is to be obedient to Alláh Ta'álá in the correct manner and the zikr is one of the means employed to attain this objective. That person who has attained this objective will be considered to be a zákir:

كُلُّ مُطِيْعٍ لِلّٰهِ فَهُوَذَاكِرٌ

Every obedient (servant) of Alláh is a zákir (Hadíth Sharíf)

You will understand this better by the following:

مَّنْ يُّطِعِ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللّٰهَ ۚ

The one who has obeyed the Rasúl has obeyed Alláh. (S.4.80.)

The means employed to be obedient to Alláh Ta'álá is the obedience to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. The one is the means, the other is the objective.

To continue: We were saying that, having made your namáz, go out to seek the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá. That is, go out to seek your rozí and consider even your effort to be the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá. See that you do not land yourself in a situation that the yád of Alláh Ta'álá does not permeate your entire being and you then start earning indiscriminately. Be sure to remember Alláh Ta'álá, in that you take note of halál and harám, já'iz and ná-já'iz, and that you do not forget to perform the next namáz when the time arrives. Thus, while you are in the 'ibádat of earning your rozí and you are anxiously awaiting the time of the next namáz, fearful lest you miss it, it is as if you are in namáz all the time! For, it is stated in the Hadíth Sharíf:

اَلْمَرْءُفِى الصَّلٰوةِ مَادَامَ يَنْتَظِرُالصَّلٰوةَ

While a person waits for the next namáz, he is in namáz.

He may be farming or trading, but in his heart is the concern for the next namáz, that the time of the next namáz must not pass by and thereby he misses his namáz. If this is his condition, then he is in namáz.

Walí-e-kámil, walí-e-náqis; ímán-e-kámil, ímán-e-náqis; and success

Let us go further. Once you have understood the above, then there is another aspect to understand: Initially this mu'min had a ta'alluq m'Alláh that was simple and based solely on ímán (nafse-ímán). But now he has forged a

special and a strong bond with Alláh Ta'álá, as seen by his condition as described above. He has progressed from simple ímán (nafse-ímán) to ímán-e-kámil and díndár-e-kámil. This state is that of a walí.

Previously, when he had only nafse-ímán, he was a walí too, but he was not a kámil walí. He was a náqis walí, a deficient one and a very deficient one at that!

To understand this better, take the following illustration: If a person has one rúpí or even a 100 rúpís, will he be called wealthy? Obviously not. Undoubtedly, being in possession of one or a 100 rúpís is, technically, "possession of wealth." However, this person has no assets, no property, and so forth, so that he cannot, in reality, be called wealthy. Similarly, that person who has nafse-ímán, in that he has correct 'aqá'id of Islám, but he has nothing else, will be said to have ímán, but not wealth of ímán – he does not have ímán-e-kámil.

Ímán-e-kámil is attained when he has reached that stage that has been expounded to you in explaining the meaning of the áyet:

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلٰوةُ فَانْتَشِرُوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللهَ كَثِيْرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ۝

This áyet ended with "la-allakum-tuflihún". It means that, only now, after fulfilling all the necessary requirements, now have hope that you will succeed fully. "Faláh" means success and it appears in the azán, after the call to "saláh". So, success is to be hoped for after "saláhiyet" comes into one, as explained above, when one's efforts are in perfect order and completely correct. When záhirí and bátiní rectitude comes into you in a perfect manner, then have hope of success – not just partial success, but full and complete success.

The object is to become a kámil-mu'min, so that one may have kámil success: the pre-condition for kámil success is to attain kámil-ímán. Nobody wants partial success. Even less, does anybody want failure. A businessman does not wish to run a business showing no profits, even less a business that shows losses. If he invests 100 000 rúpís and his returns are exactly 100 000 rúpís, showing no profit, he cannot be called successful. If his returns are 100 001 rúpís, showing a profit of one rúpí, he can still not be called

successful. He is successful only if he has substantial profits.

This is the situation in worldly commerce (tijárate-dunyá). But understand well that Alláh Ta'álá has sent us from the álame-arwáh for commerce for the hereafter (tijárate-ákhirat). To be successful in this tijárate-ákhirat it is not sufficient to have only nafse-ímán, but one should have kámil-ímán as has been explained above. Only then can one be fully successful.

Why have I used the term "tijárat"? It is because this term is used in the Qur'án Sharíf. Alláh Ta'álá says:

يَاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْاهَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيْمٍ ۝

O you who believe! Shall I show you a commerce that will save you from a painful doom? (S.61.10.)

Is this question addressed to the kuffár or to the Muslim? Obviously, to the mu'min. So, being a mu'min – one who has already brought ímán – why should such a person be warned about a severe punishment? The reason is that being a mu'min is not sufficient. As yet there is no question of complete success. There is still some commerce to undertake, involving the demands of ímán. Then only can he hope for complete success.

Do you understand?

Now, what is this commerce that Alláh Ta'álá wants us to undertake? The áyet continues:

تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ

You should believe in Alláh and His messenger (S.61.11.)

Firstly, we have to bring ímán on Alláh Ta'álá and on Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. "To have ímán" is a phrase that includes both having ímán on Alláh Ta'álá and on Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. If a person brings ímán on Alláh Ta'álá, but not on Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, he is not a mu'min.

Then comes:

وَتُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۝

And should strive in the path of Alláh with your wealth and your lives.

You should make full effort, physically and financially, záhirí and bátiní, as one does in any commercial activity. In worldly trade and commerce

we see to what extent people exert themselves physically and financially. Businessmen do not just relax at home, but travel from city to city, from country to country, east, west, south and north. Also, they do not keep their money locked up, but make good use of it to further their trade. In a similar way, it is Alláh Ta'álá's order that we make full effort in the path of Alláh Ta'álá – that we virtually finish ourselves, our lives and our wealth, in the path that Alláh Ta'álá has ordered us to tread. Then only will you have complete success, O mu'mins, and not the partial success that merely bringing ímán has.

Let us put it all together again:

When you have completed your namáz, spread out on the earth to seek your rozí. You should understand that the rozí you are earning is also the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and not solely the result of your effort. And your effort should be such that your záhir and your bátin should be immersed in the yád of Alláh Ta'álá. In other words, you have submerged your body and your inner being in the remembrance of Alláh Ta'álá. Now have hope of full success. With kámil ímán comes kámil success. The level of success will depend on the level of your zikr. Do you understand?

The Qur'án Sharíf is a "Zikr"

Having understood this, then let us carry on and expand a bit more on "zikr": (S.15.9.)

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْنَ ۝

We, even We, reveal the Reminder (Zikr) and lo! We verily are its guardian

The Qur'án Sharíf has been called the "Zikr".

Applying "zikran-kathíran" in this context, we can conclude that we should acquire "the Qur'án Sharíf in abundance". This means that the words of the Qur'án Sharíf should be recited correctly "in abundance," the correct meanings of the Qur'án Sharíf should be understood "in abundance" and the orders of the Qur'án Sharíf should be put into practice fully and correctly "in abundance".

Alláh Ta'álá has given the kuffár many hard knocks in the Qur'án Sharíf.

For example, Alláh Ta'álá states:

فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ

The comfort of the life of the world is but brief as compared to the Hereafter. (S.9.38.)

Life in this world is but for a few days. Here, and in several other places, Alláh Ta'álá draws the attention of the mu'min away from life in this world towards the ákhirat. The mu'min, therefore, does not content himself with this temporary dunyá: his gaze is turned away from this dunyá towards the everlasting ákhirat. So he busies himself with the tijárat for the ákhirat.

The Qur'án Sharíf is a miracle

Why does the mu'min take this áyet so seriously? The reason is that the Qur'án Sharíf is that miracle that was revealed as a proof of the nabúwat of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم and this is sufficient for the mu'min.

The Qur'án Sharíf is such a miracle that the most accomplished composers of Arabia have thrown in the towel and have accepted that the Qur'án Sharíf is the Word of Alláh and have admitted to their helplessness in that they could not compile anything like it. For those who have brought ímán, the mu'mins, this acknowledged miracle which is the Qur'án Sharíf, is Therefore, sufficient. When the mu'min has accepted the miracle of the Qur'án Sharíf and thereby he has also accepted the nabúwat of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, then it becomes a simple matter to accept the statement that this dunyá is "matá'un-qalíl". This statement is then sufficient for him to turn his gaze away from this dunyá and get on with the task of tijárat for the ákhirat. He then busies himself with those amilus-sálihah (virtuous deeds) which appear in the Qur'án Sharíf, and abstains from those manhí-anhá (prohibited deeds) which also appear in the Qur'án Sharíf, both of which are associated with ímán. This the mu'min does at the záhirí and bátiní levels.

For example: Just as he has left off those substances which intoxicate his body at the záhirí level, so he leaves off takabbur which intoxicates his ego at the bátiní level, and so forth.

In this way, he pursues the amilus-sálihah and abstains from the manhí-anhá until his last breath. He thus progresses from nafse-ímán to kámil ímán, attaining kámil success.

Having accepted the Qur'án Sharíf as a miracle, what are the roles of Hadíth Sharíf and fiqah?

Firstly: the role of Hadíth Sharíf

This is also from the Qur'án Sharíf. The Qur'án Sharíf states:

وَمَآ اٰتٰكُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ فَخُذُوْهُ وَمَا نَهٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوْا ۚ

And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it). (S.59.7.)

What was it that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم gave? He gave certain instructions, which we call Hadíth Sharíf. So, we are ordered to take these instructions. So, Hadíth Sharíf is also the Word of Alláh Ta'álá through Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. It is wahí ghair-matlú' (revelation not for recitation). In other words, the Qur'án Sharíf is the text and Hadíth Sharíf forms the explanatory notes.

Secondly: the role of fiqah

This is also Kitábulláh. The Qur'án Sharíf states:

وَلَوْ رَدُّوْهُ إِلَى الرَّسُوْلِ وَإِلٰٓى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَنْبِطُوْنَهٗ مِنْهُمْ ؕ

If they had referred it to the Messenger and such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter, would have understood it. (S.4.83.)

"Yastambitúnahú" – This "istimbát" is brought about through fiqah. Fiqah is the means by which the orders are clarified and systematised.

For example: The Qur'án Sharíf has orders in it concerning wudhú, namáz, rozah, halál and harám, and so forth. These orders do not appear in just one section under specific headings, but are scattered in various sections. The compilation of all these topics in a classified manner under specific headings is called fiqah. In this way, all references to tahárat have been

extracted from different sections, placed in a specific chapter and labelled "Kitábut-Tahárat".

In a similar way, all references to namáz have been extracted from various sections and compiled into a specific chapter labelled "Kitábus-Salát". In this way, numerous other topics scattered in different sections of the Qur'án Sharíf have been extracted and compiled into definite, classified chapters. This compilation is now called fiqah.

So, the Qur'án Sharíf is the text, the elucidation of this text is Hadíth Sharíf and the classified chapters are termed fiqah. All three, the Qur'án Sharíf, the Hadíth Sharíf and fiqah have to be looked at as a composite whole comprising "Kitábulláh".

Do you understand?

Munkare-Hadíth & fiqah – those who reject Hadíth Sharíf & fiqh

Some say – and you would have heard it too: "Our belief is that only the Qur'án Sharíf can act as proof." They reject Hadíth Sharíf – they are "munkare-Hadíth". Others will accept the Qur'án Sharíf and the Hadíth Sharíf, but they reject fiqah – they are "munkare-fiqah".

We have adequately shown their wrong concepts. Hadíth Sharíf and fiqah, together with the Qur'án Sharíf, form "Kitábulláh," which forms the basis of proving any point in Islám. If one has proved a point from any one of these three sources, then that is adequate proof for that point to form part of the Sharí'at.

Therefore, for any person to say: "Prove your point from the Qur'án Sharíf only," is incorrect because this very Kitábulláh instructs one to accept the word of Alláh Ta'álá's Rasúl صلى الله عليه وسلم. Use his sayings as evidence.

Here is an illustration to explain this point:

In a court-case, if the plaintiff (the person having a claim on another person) wants to prove his claim, he needs an independent witness. If he has such a witness, his claim will be said to be substantiated. If the defendant (the person against whom the claim is made) now says that he is not prepared to accept the evidence of the witness and that he will only accept the plaintiff's claim against him if the judge himself gives evidence, then this argument of the defendant will not be accepted. It is the judge

who has ruled that the evidence of the witness will serve as substantiating proof. The defendant will be forced to abide by this ruling of the judge and accept the evidence of the witness.

If you understand this illustration, then you will understand why it is wrong for a person to put forward the argument: "I will only accept what you claim to be the Sharí'at if you can prove it from the Qur'án Sharíf." It is Alláh Ta'álá who has already stated in that very Qur'án Sharíf the rule that the evidence of His Rasúl صلى الله عليه وسلم is sufficient as substantiating proof.

Ay-yuhat-tulláb! O you students' Do you understand?

Summary and du'á

Today, several aspects of Sulúk have been placed before you. The topics of pákí and ná-pákí, both záhirí and bátiní, have been discussed. The discussion on bátiní pákí and ná-pákí touched on the subjects of ikhlás and riyá and the roles that doubts and thoughts (wehm) play. The topics of plain or simple ímán (nafse-ímán) and perfect or complete ímán (kámil ímán), as well as the method of attaining perfection (kamál), have also been discussed, as well as the topics of partial and complete success.

Perfection – kamál – is an objective in every sphere, therefore, in the sphere of ímán kamál also becomes an objective. This perfection in ímán is attained on the basis of the Qur'ánic áyet recited previously:

وَمَآ اٰتٰكُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ فَخُذُوْهُ وَمَا نَهٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوْا ۚ

And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it). (S.59.7.)

This means that kamále-ímán is dependent on kamále-ittibá' of the Sharí'at, both záhirí and bátiní.

By the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of Hadhratwálá, various topics have flowed from my lips to settle in your hearts, to remain with you, not only for the duration of your stay here, but to remain with you till you reach your homes, to be of use to you in your home environment and at work.

Tijárat for the ákhirat! O you mu'min! After your namáz-e-haqiqi – your

actual namáz – you are in namáz all the time because of your anxious anticipation of the next namáz. If you are all the time in ikhlás and if you are all the time in kamále-ímán, then you will be in kamále-success.

May Alláh Ta'álá grant us the taufíqáte-arzání to tread along the path of His ridhá all the time. Khudá háfiz.

BOOKLET NUMBER SIX

Rabiul Awwal 1415 - August 1993

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Alhamdulilláh, through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our sheikh, Masíhul-Ummat Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه this sixth booklet is now being published.

The sadness of Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه passing away has been felt by all who had come to know him, either directly or indirectly through those who were connected to him and through his illuminating teachings. The loss felt, as has been pointed out by many others, is the loss of separation. This is apart from the inner feelings of regret at not having taken full advantage of his sohbat while he was still with us.

The following words of Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه take on a very real meaning at this moment in time: "Your sheikh will not always be with you, but his teachings will be with you." May Alláh Ta'álá give us all the taufíq to act according to his precious teachings.

The passing away of the mashá'ikh of Tasawwuf does not cause the principles of Sulúk to alter. Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه took special care to explain these principles in his discourses. These principles still operate. Yes, a sheikh-e-kámil may modify a principle in its expressivity during his life-time, depending on varying circumstances, but the basic principle will still remain operative.

A classic example is the principle of eating less. This is one of the four principles involved in mujáhadah-e-jismání. This principle is still applicable. However, we have been advised NOT to follow the extremely strict discipline that Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عله advocated in his kitáb "Tabhlígh-ud-Dín". The principle remains, but its application is modified.

We are highly indebted to Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه for setting out not only the principles of Tasawwuf, but also other invaluable principles of practical value in our daily lives. Hadhratjí's رحمة الله عليه teachings remain with us as vivid splashes of light in an ever increasingly dark world. May we all continue to benefit consistently and continuously from these teachings.
Dr.I.M.

[This is a translation of a majlis-e-khás held by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه in Jalálábád, India, on the 4th October, 1989, corresponding to the 4th Rabi-al-Awwal, 1410.]

'IBÁDAT – WORSHIP

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Of the 24 hours of our day and night, setting aside six to seven hours for sleep, the rest of the time is solely for 'ibádat! To repeat: setting aside six to seven hours for sleep from the 24 hours of our day and night, the remainder of the time is solely for 'ibádat!

Those of you sitting at the back, can you hear? You are not sitting there mindlessly? Of course not.

Sleep: set aside six to seven hours

Do you understand? To set aside six to seven hours for sleep from the 24 hours of one's day and night, is absolutely necessary. Yes, it may occasionally happen that one does not manage to sleep a full six to seven hours, but one should never make a habit of sleeping less than six to seven hours per 24 hours. I repeat: Never, but never, make it a habit to sleep less than six to seven hour over 24 hours.

It may happen during travels or when one is ill, that one does not sleep well – these unavoidable, excusable situations are different matters. Occasionally, one may sleep less due to special circumstances and this is not contrary to the rule we have set forth: One should not make it a habit

to sleep less than six to seven hours per 24 hours, but should try to sleep the full six to seven hours.

Eat to fill your stomach and not your desires

When it comes to eating, one's routine should be to eat a stomach-full. Taking into account that each person's level of hunger is different, nevertheless, one should have the habit of eating sufficient to fill one's stomach.

Again, it may occasionally happen that one eats less than this, but, nevertheless, one should never, but never, make it a habit to continually eat less than a full stomach. To eat less occasionally due to special circumstances is not contrary to the rule laid down: One should have the habit of eating sufficient to fill one's stomach.

Mix with others to the degree of necessity

However, when it comes to mixing with others, do not associate with others to one's "stomach-full!" This is a different mode of putting the concept to you! Do not mix with others to one's fill. Meet others to the extent of necessity, but not more.

This meeting of others to the extent of necessity is also included in 'ibádat; just as the habit of eating to one's fill is 'ibádat; just as the habit of sleeping to one's fill, six to seven hours, is also 'ibádat.

Have you understood these concepts? If so, let us go further.

Speak to others to the extent of necessity

When it comes to speaking, do not speak with others to one's "stomach-full". Speak with others only to the extent of necessity. Necessary speech is also included in 'ibádat.

O little ones, do you understand?

On the one hand you are told: Eat to your fill; sleep to your fill, six – seven hours. And now, on the other hand, you are told: Do not meet others to your fill; and do not speak to your fill. To the contrary, meet others only to the extent of necessity and speak only to the extent of necessity. All these four activities – to eat to one's fill, to sleep to one's fill, not to meet

to one's fill and not to speak to one's fill – if performed within their limits, as explained, all attain the status of 'ibádat.

Purpose of man's creation is to make the 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá

This is the purpose for which man was created. This coming into existence of man (insán), this "manufacturing" of insán, is for this purpose only, that he should make the 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ ۝

And I have not created the Jinn and Mankind except that they should worship Me. (S.51.56)

This is the object and purpose why insán has been created. And if insán deviates from this objective, then he has fallen from his status as insán – in appearance he is alive, but he is actually dead!

What does this mean? It means that he is now of no use. Having deviated from his objective instead of being useful and successful he is now useless and a failure. To put it another way: When an object has been created for a specific purpose and it does not fulfil that purpose, then it is useless and a failure.

For example: Take this pen in my hand. It has been made for the purpose of writing and not for eating. Clear and simple. If it cannot write, then it is not fulfilling the object for which it has been manufactured. It then becomes useless and redundant. It is a failure. Will you take extra care to keep it safely in your pocket or with your other writing materials? Of course not. You will throw it in the rubbish bin.

Do you understand this example?

So, in a similar way, if this human being does not fulfil the object for which he has been created, he is useless and redundant. Throw him also in the rubbish bin! This insán has deviated from the purpose for which he has been created. So, being useless, having left off his objective, cast him also into the rubbish bin!

Yes, for now, he may still have some little use. So let him be. Let us not be hasty. He may not have the enthusiasm, the vim and vigour he should

have, but he may not be completely dead. He may be of some use, so let him be.

Take the example of this pen again: It may not write. However, there may be a remedy available – the fountain pen may be filled with ink again, or the ball pen may be fitted with a refill. Then it will be of use again, provided that the pen is capable of accepting that ink or refill. So, let us not be hasty in throwing it away. It may still be of some use.

Three categories of insán: useless, useful, neither useless nor useful

This insán, therefore, has three possibilities:

1. *He is completely useless.*
2. *He is neither completely useless nor is he of full use.*
3. *He is of full use.*

Let us take each category in turn:

Category One: That insán who is completely useless, one who has deviated completely from the purpose for which he has been created, who does not have the capacity within him to fulfil the object for which he has been created, is the ghair-mu'min, the non-Muslim.

Category Two: In the second category is that person who is partially fulfilling his objective, but not fully so. Let him be for now. He has the potential within him to accept Haqq. Therefore, he is not without hope. There is a glimmer of hope because one sees that, at times, he does accept the Haqq and he does practise according to the Haqq. There is promise in him. He is to be valued – he has the potential for qabúliyet (acceptance). Yet, this much is quite obvious that an object is a failure and is useless in proportion to the degree it fails to achieve the basic objective and purpose for which it has been created.

Category Three: In this third category is that insán who steadily, correctly and fully fulfils the purpose for which he has been created. This insán attains the desired qurb (closeness) and the desired qabúliyet and he has attained firmness and also a great value.

So, insán has different levels of attainment.

Coming back to insán's original purpose: We had said that, besides setting aside six to seven hours for sleep regularly, whatever time that insán has

is solely for ’ibádat. Whatever he does during the remaining 17 to 18 hours must never be free of ’ibádat. Whatever work he does, must be done solely with the niyet of ’ibádat.

The place of ’ilm and qabúliyet with regard to ’ibádat

This brings us to the next point: ’Ibádat can never be ’ibádat until and unless one does not have the ’ilm of performing that ibádat.

It logically follows that the ’ibádat of gaining ’ilm takes priority over the ’ibádat of performing deeds and actions. It now becomes incumbent to attain that amount of necessary ’ilm to be able to perform deeds correctly. This acquisition of ’ilm then also becomes ’ibádat.

How does one acquire this ’ilm? Through study! It is not absolutely necessary to study the prescribed Arabic kitábs. If one does not know Arabic, fair enough. Study authoritative and authentic kitábs in Urdú. This is acceptable. Let us go a step further: If one is unable to acquire ’ilm through the written word – that is, by studying kitábs – then acquire the necessary ’ilm through the spoken word. Acquire ’ilm through listening and by asking questions.

The objective is to acquire correct ’ilm, whether it is through the written word or through the spoken word. Whatever the method adopted, it is obvious that acquiring correct ’ilm takes precedence over ’ibádate-amalí – the ’ibádat of performing deeds. Any ’ibádat performed without correct ’ilm will, obviously, also be incorrect; and incorrect ’ibádat is not qabúl (accepted). The objective is to perform that ’ibádat that is qabúl. Qabúliyet is dependent on performing one’s ’ibádat correctly which, in turn, is dependent on correct ’ilm. It follows that ’ibádat based on incorrect ’ilm will not be qabúl. Such ’ibádat will have no credence. And the purpose for which insán has been created is ’ibádat – ‘ibádat that is qabúl.

So, 17 to 18 hours of our 24 hours is for the purpose of ’ibádat. Whatever one does during this time, one should do it with the niyet of ’ibádat. This means that whatever work one has to tackle, one should first say to oneself: “This task that I am about to do has to be done within the confines of the Sharí’ah. What are the shar’í laws in respect of this task?” The tasks may vary. Some have to farm. Others are in employment. Others are in trade

and commerce. Others are artisans. Others have to teach. Others have to study; and so forth.

So, the farming that the farmer does also becomes ’ibádat. But when? When he farms according to the ’ilm that Alláh Ta’álá and His Rasúl صلى الله عليه وسلم have passed on. The farmer has to adhere to the laws of Alláh Ta’álá: What type of land is it? Whose land is it? Is it his or somebody else’s? If it is somebody else’s, does he have the owner’s permission or is he farming without his permission? Is the owner happy or displeased? Has the land been grabbed and usurped or has the owner given permission without duress?

If everything is according to the Sharí’ah thus far, the next phase of farming is planting the seeds. How have the seeds been bought? What are the laws of buying and selling? And so forth. If this farming is done according to the Sharí’ah from beginning to end, then it is ’ibádat. The moment the farmer deviates from the Sharí’ah, it ceases to be ibádat. The farmer has deviated from the purpose of his creation.

In this way, one should analyse all other tasks which one may be involved in during those 17 to 18 hours. For example: In trade and commerce, what should one deal in? How should one buy? How should one sell? The necessary ’ilm has to be attained. This business then becomes ’ibádat if it follows the laws of the Sharí’ah. The moment the business deviates from the Sharí’ah it ceases to be ibádat. And, seeing that the purpose for which insán has been created is ’ibádat, this insán has deviated from this objective. In outward appearance this person may be said to be an ádmí (human being), but, in reality, he has ceased to be an ádmí.

Do you understand the principle?

So, one now knows that all tasks performed in those 17 to 18 hours, if performed according to the laws of Alláh Ta’álá, taking care to act according to His wishes and to gain His pleasure, then all these tasks will be ibádat. And if one deviates from His laws, then one will have shifted away from ’ibádat and away from the purpose for which one has been created, in proportion to the degree of non-compliance.

Depending on the degree of deviation, the individual may then be a complete ádmí (that is, a civilised human being) or a deficient one or a very

deficient one or not an ádmí at all (even though he may have the outward appearance of an ádmí).

Sleep is also ’ibádat

What about the six to seven hours set aside for sleep? This period is meant for sleep. Is anybody stopping you from sleeping six to seven hours? On face value the period spent sleeping appears wasted and does not appear to be ibádat. However, this sleep is a means of regaining bodily vigour, of refreshing the body and mind, of bringing cheer and joy into the heart, of attaining tranquillity within oneself, so that the remaining 17 to 18 hours may be utilised for ’ibádat. This act of sleeping for the sake of ’ibádat is also then ’ibádat! This sleeping is like gold – very precious and valuable – because it is for the sake of ’ibádat, which is in itself very precious. In this way, even one’s sleep is not free of ’ibádat.

Do you understand?

Misconceptions about ’ibádat removed

We have the misconception that ’ibádat is the name given to the performance of namáz or the keeping of rozas or the recitation of tasbíhs or of tiláwat of the Qur’án Sharíf only. If a person considers only these to be ibádat, to the exclusion of everything else, he has put himself into a tizzy, into confusion. He is like a fool who has hit himself on the head with a sledgehammer so that he becomes dizzy, falls down and becomes concussed. So, when a person has the above misconception, he will concentrate only on these few a’mál and put aside all other ibádát. This neglect is such that, in his immaturity, he will eventually also leave off all that ibádát which he had been thinking as the only ibádát one had to perform.

Do you understand, O you students?

Knocking oneself on the head will cause such dizziness that that ’ibádat which one considered as the only ’ibádat also gets omitted. Why? Because one now feels dizzy all the time! How can one perform namáz, because one is now dizzy! How can one keep rozas, because one is now dizzy! How can one recite one’s tasbíhs, because one is now dizzy! How can one make one’s tiláwat, because one is now dizzy! Because of performing all those super-

obligatory (nafl) namáz, reciting tasbíhát and making tiláwat all the time, staying up night after night, one has now stopped everything, including those very practices which one had considered were the only acts of ’ibádat. It has happened!

When this basic ’ibádat goes, what chance is there that he will be of use in any other ’ibádat?

Health should not be compromised at the cost of nafl ’ibádat

His health suffers like that of someone stung by a wasp. He is burning feverishly inside. His limbs have no strength. His mind is weakened. His digestive system is all upset.

Similar problems may arise with advancing age, but this is ghair-ikhtiyárí – one has no choice over the matter. As a person gets older, weakening of the body and mind are unavoidable processes of ageing.

On the other hand, deliberately bringing on these problems on oneself is ikhtiyárí. Why have you brought it on yourself? Why have you considered only these practices to be ibádat, so much so that, night after night, you stay awake and continue throughout the day as well? So that, besides nafl namáz, tasbíhát, tiláwat and fasting, you are doing no other work?

This insán, this Musalmán, has not understood the purpose for which he has been created. He has deviated from the objective for which he has been created. He has considered only these few practices to be ibádat.

Generally speaking, this is the concept of ’ibádat in everybody’s mind. When a person is farming, does anybody refer to him as making ibádat? When a person is in employment does anybody consider him to be making ibádat? Whatever task a person is involved in at any particular time, does anybody consider it to be ibádat? In his mind only that person involved with namáz, rozas, tasbíhát and tiláwat is considered to be in ’ibádat, and anybody doing any other work is not so considered, with the result that those in farming, in employment, and so forth, will now be looked on with contempt! He will consider himself to be better and superior: “Am I not making so many nafl namáz, staying up night after night? Am I not keeping extra rozas besides those of Ramadhán?”

True ’ibádat brings about humility

In his own eyes he feels he is good and he looks with contempt at the non-namází. Not for a moment does he realise that the ’ibádat that he is performing with this attitude can never be considered to be ibádat.

Why is this so?

The reason is this: ’ibádat has a shán – a special quality and dignity: Performing continuous ’ibádat brings within a person the quality of abdiyet – the special quality and effect of abdiyet is that a person develops the quality of ’ijz (humility) and the effect of ’ijz is this, that one does not look with contempt at others; and if this last point is not present, how can that ’ibádat be considered to be real ibádat?

Do you understand?

Some of you have come from nearby areas, others from far-off places and others still from very far-off places. So, it is important that you understand these concepts.

The importance of understanding usúls

Try to understand the principles (usúls) underlying one’s way of living. The branching categories and ramifications are numerous. To attempt to learn all the details is difficult, so try to catch onto the basic principles. O you students! Try to comprehend the basic principles and, thereafter, measure all the ramifications of one’s entire life against these standards. This task is so much easier.

That is why some sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم, after coming to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and spending some time with him, at the time of departing for home used to request from him: “O Rasúlulláhصلی الله علیه وسلم! The laws are many. To remember them all fully is going to be very difficult. Can you not show us one or two basics which we may utilise, taking them into consideration and judging ourselves thereby?” Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم used to advise them accordingly. To some he gave one or two rules; to others three or four; and to others even more, depending on the individual making the request. Bear in mind also that the Arabs were such that they kept faithfully to their promises. This was an outstanding quality to be seen in the Arabs, that they did not go back on their promises.

The following incident illustrates what I have just said:

One sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه who had stayed a few days with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. was about to depart for home. He came to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and said: "O Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم! The laws are many, the branches and off-shoots are many, the a'mál to perform are many. Can you not show me one such item which I can remember on all occasions?" Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم said: "As you wish. Remember the following: Do not tell lies!"

Truthfulness leads to salvation and lies lead to destruction

This instruction appears in the Hadíth Sharíf as well:

اَلصِّدْقُ يُنْجِيْ وَالْكِذْبُ يُهْلِكُ

Truthfulness leads to success (finally), whereas lies (finally) lead to destruction.

This saying encompasses everything.

For example: A person is in business, but he lies to his customers and cheats them. He justifies himself by saying: "It is impossible to do business without a bit of cheating. If one were to tell the truth, my business would not prosper."

On the other hand, you will find somebody else who is firm. His attitude is: "Whether I succeed or fail in business is irrelevant. The basis of my existence is 'ibádat and this business venture is also an 'ibádat. It is, therefore, compulsory for me to speak the truth and not tell lies." He, therefore, sticks to the truth. When serving a customer he explains: "This item is very old. It won't last long, so don't buy it. If you are thinking of using it for a few days only, then, fine. Take it. However, my advice is to buy one of those – this one is faulty, but that one is in perfect order. The faulty one costs so much, the good one costs so much."

He speaks the truth and points out the defects in the items he sells. The customer may feel unhappy at such forthrightness and may leave the shop to go buy somewhere else.

This shopkeeper has apparently lost out because of his honesty. At the end of the day, he has hardly any sales. The other shopkeepers, on the

contrary, are very busy and appear very successful. However, the customers are not fools and are busy assessing their purchases. "What's this? The other shopkeeper told me it would last a lifetime, but here it's broken already. He was obviously lying to me. But I see my friend has had no problems with his goods. And he buys from that new shop where the owner points out all the faults in his goods. He is not foolish, just truthful. He is not concerned merely with making a sale. He is no cheat like the others." The end result is:

اَلصِّدْقُ يُنْجِيْ وَالْكِذْبُ يُهْلِكُ

Truthfulness leads to success (finally), whereas lies (finally) lead to destruction.

After a while, the first shopkeeper's business picks up very well and the other shopkeepers find their businesses slowing down.

Another example: Take the situation where an ustád is teaching several students. As the students progress in their studies, their understanding also deepens. When full justice is not done to a topic they will catch on immediately. "He dealt with the topic very superficially. The ustád has not gone fully in-depth into the subject in the manner he should have. He is pulling the wool over our eyes."

Another example: Take the situation of a person in employment. The worker sees carefully and fully to the work and responsibilities given to him, working with complete honesty and truthfulness. He arrives punctually and leaves only when it is time for him to leave. During his working day, he performs his tasks with full dedication. Such a worker will attract the attention of his superiors and will earn promotion after promotion. This person has worked with honour and dignity, and not with deceit.

Do you understand? Many just read the text in the kitábs and do not look at the explanatory footnotes. In this way, one will not fully understand the meaning of the text.

The beneficial effect of sohbat

To continue: The sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه was told by Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم: "Do

not tell lies!" With this parting advice ringing in his ears the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه left.

Before coming to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. this person had a number of bad habits. However, now being in a state of ímán and being in the presence of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم he had gained the status of a sahábí and his internal condition had altered.

This does happen, even nowadays. Just recently I received a letter from a person in Delhi, a V.I.P. over there. He wrote: "Hadhrat, staying with you my condition became so good, so good, that I thought that this state of mine will, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, be firmly grounded forever. How to describe it? Every moment I felt a special aura and my namáz was full of khushú' and khudhú'."

Concerning ghussah, he wrote. "I had already made a vow in my heart – and this I had mentioned to Hadhrat at the time – that I had spat ghussah out of my system and in future at home and outside I will, in-shá- Alláh Ta'álá, not allow ghussah to go beyond bounds."

What he wrote next is also worthy of note:

"However, after only a few days of reaching home I find a decline setting in, a weakness creeping in."

Breaking promises is breaking tenets and breaking hearts

Coming back to the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه. Before spending time with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم he had three bad habits: he used to steal; he used to drink alcohol; and he used to commit ziná.

Habits die hard. Back in his home environment, the urge to steal arose in him again. He was now greatly upset and in a quandary. "What's happening? I have just spent some time with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم., sat with him and listened to him, and now?" He was in deep thought, debating with himself: "This is very bad! If I were to steal and presented myself again to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and he were to ask: 'You did not steal, did you?' What then?"

Of course, Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم used to receive Divine revelation (wahí), either wahí-matlú' (Qur'án Sharíf) or wahí-ghair-matlú' (Hadíth Sharíf).

"If I had stolen and I were to say: 'No, I did not steal,' then it would be an outright lie. And Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم had told me not to lie. And I

had promised him I would not. There I promised one thing and here I turn back on my word! This is being unfaithful. This is breaking a promise and also breaking a tenet of the Dín. If, on the other hand, I were to speak the truth and confess: 'Yes, I did steal,' then it would be letting Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم down and hurting him even more!"

Is my voice reaching you? You are not falling asleep by any chance?

Rasúlulláh's صلى الله عليه وسلم heart would definitely break. He would most definitely be grieved. I would imagine the following train of thoughts going through his mind: "He made the request, thereupon I advised him and now look at his condition. And he even stayed here!" So, breaking that promise is not just breaking one's word, but it is also breaking a tenet of Dín and breaking the heart of not just anybody, but that heart which is more precious than the hearts of all the kings put together! The sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه thought. "What type of insániyet is this? What type of ádmiyet is this? What type of 'ibádat is this of mine?"

Just now I had mentioned that the Arab was renowned for keeping to his promise. This was a natural trait of his character. Also, the sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه had heard the Qur'ánic áyet:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَوْفُوا۟ بِٱلْعُقُودِ ۚ

O you Believers! Fulfil your promises. (S.5.1.)

Alláh Ta'álá is well aware of your doings. So, fulfil your promises.

The nett result of these three – the innate temperament to keep a promise, the order of Alláh Ta'álá and the instruction of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم – was that the sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه told himself. "How can I steal?" His stealing came to an end!

Again I ask: Is my voice reaching you?

You are not going to stay with your sheikh all the time! Did not the sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه stay with Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم for a while and then return home? To sit here is to listen attentively and to create a place in your heart for these talks. This is the concept behind coming here. And, having stayed here in this manner, to return home and live accordingly. Otherwise, it is being unfaithful.

To continue: The sahábí's رضی الله تعالی عنه stealing came to an end. Then came the hour when he used to drink. Just as we have set times for breakfast, lunch, tea and supper, so he had a set time for his drinking. At the approach of meal-times one looks forward to eating. It does not necessarily mean that one is absolutely famished and craving for food. No. It is just that one is conditioned to eat at a certain time and when the time approaches the urge to eat arises, this being an indication that one is hungry.

So, when the hour approached for the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه to drink, according to his old habit the urge to drink welled up strongly in him. This inclination to drink, this strong desire to drink, upset him and threw him into consternation. Still fresh in his mind was the awareness of having been with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. The internal conflict, the arguments and counter-arguments again raged through him. "How can I follow this urge? If I were to drink and presented myself before Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم were to ask: 'Did you drink alcohol, or did you not?' what will be my answer? If I deny drinking, it will be a blatant lie. If I were to tell the truth and admit to drinking, with what face would I do it?"

Having done what one has been told not to do, any sensible person will definitely feel ashamed to admit to it openly. What rashness would it be! What defiance!

"Break my promise? Break a tenet of Dín? Break the heart of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم? I will not! I will not drink!" In this way, he stopped drinking. His age-old habit was broken.

Then came the time for his third bad habit. In the days of Jáhiliyah (ignorance – the pre-Islámic era), he used to commit ziná. The urge to commit ziná welled up in him with force. Again the shock, the consternation. Still fresh in his mind was the awareness of having been with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. Again the internal debating. "This is even more shameless than stealing and drinking," he told himself. "After committing this indecent act, if I were to present myself before Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and he were to ask...? If I were to say: 'I did not,' it would be a blatant lie. What did I promise? I will not lie. So, besides breaking a promise, I will also be breaking a tenet of Dín. If, on the other hand, I do not lie and brazenly say: 'Yes, I did,' with what face will I say it? How will I be able to bring these words

to my lips? Where will I hide my face? What of the grief to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم? How can I be so callous as to break his heart? A curse be upon me! It is better for me to die!"

This was the inner turmoil in him. Finally, sense prevailed and he left off ziná. In this way, he cast off all three evil habits. The basis for this achievement was Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم stating to him just one working principle coupled with an astute appraisal of his temperament.

Yes, the person has to be of that calibre that when he says: "Very well," he sticks firmly to his promise. The fact that he himself had made the request in the first place and the instruction he had received was from none other than the august personality of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. grounded the resolve he had made even more firmly. Yes, the calibre of the person should be such that, having stayed with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and listened to him, the capacity to accept Haqq should blossom within him to such an extent that even being away from Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم the capacity for acceptance should still remain.

Do you understand?

Consideration for your sheikh, whether present or absent

What we are saying is that the principle should enter the mind in the form of 'ilm and then become enmeshed in the heart in such a way that being absent from one's sheikh is the same as being present. This being so, then you will understand the mas'alah of Sulúk that is enunciated. What is that? It is the following:

ȇËÎďĭ ȁÿÎã ȴṆàȂó Îô±ǒ ȴ° æǒ÷ ÔĨ¦Í

Have the same consideration for your sheikh, whether present or absent.

This principle has been adequately elucidated above, through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of my sheikh.

Mas'alah of hádhir-názir

Our 'aqá'id (beliefs), based on our ímán, are that only Alláh Ta'álá is hádhir-názir (omnipresent.) As you can see, the sheikh is not considered to be omnipresent. The attitude to the sheikh, as explained in the principle of

Sulúk just outlined, forms the basis for attaining the reality of the concept of Alláh Ta'álá being hádhir-názir. At that stage, when one has not as yet developed the desired relationship with one's sheikh, the concept of Alláh Ta'álá being hádhir-názir is only at the level of academic conviction (ilme-yaqín). After building a relationship with one's sheikh on the principle that one should have the same consideration for him whether present or absent, this relationship becomes a reflection of the relationship one should have with Alláh Ta'álá based on the 'aqídah of Alláh Ta'álá being hádhir-názir.

Did not the sahábí's رضى الله تعالى عنه thoughts run along these lines: "If I presented myself to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم and he were to ask, then?" Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was absent at that moment, but the concept is there: Being absent, yet it is as if he were present. On every occasion, being absent it was as if he were present. The effect was that all three evil habits were abandoned.

Corollaries drawn from the principle

What has been enunciated is the principle of Sulúk. From it, a number of points become apparent.

Firstly: importance of having a muslih.

A Musalmán mu'min should, as far as possible, not be without a sheikh. It is not necessary to become bai'at. However, one should sift out and carefully select one such person for one's isláh. One should relate to him all one's activities and whatever he advises, one should follow diligently. This Musalmán's Islám will progress tranquilly at all times from the viewpoint of 'ibádat. This means that besides the six to seven hours set aside for sleep, the rest of his time will progress as 'ibádat. All his evil activities, all his shameless ways, will fall away one by one and he will move steadily in the direction of 'ibádat.

Leaving off sin is 'ibádat

When he had stopped drinking alcohol, he had now stepped towards 'ibádat. Is that not so? In other words, leaving off sin is 'ibádat! Abandoning alcohol is 'ibádat; abandoning stealing is 'ibádat; and abandoning ziná is

’ibádat! When an act is evil, abandoning that act is ’ibádat! Therefore, a person seeking his isláh has to keep his sheikh – his muslih – informed of his activities. By following his advice he will be progressing along the road of ’ibádat.

The sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه had presented himself to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم for his isláh. His frame of mind was such that the company of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم had a certain effect on him, so that whenever a situation arose where there was an inclination to do wrong, the effect of his stay with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم manifested itself and stopped him from that wrong.

This is the first point: A Musalmán mu’min should designate one person as his muslih (guide and reformer), having selected him with great care and having the correct faith and confidence in him (i’tiqád-o-i’timád). This in itself is an ’ibádat, because this appointment of a person as one’s muslih is a means to another ’ibádat, the ’ibádat of leaving bad and evil ways and coming towards goodness.

The objective is muhabbat of Alláh Ta’álá. Muhabbat for one’s sheikh is an aid and assistance to attain the muhabbat amalí (the practical love) of Alláh Ta’álá, which is ’ibádat. Therefore, the former also becomes ’ibádat. Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم has specifically requested from Alláh Ta’álá. What is that?

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يَّنْفَعُنِيْ حُبُّهُ عِنْدَكَ

O Alláh! Grant me the rizq of Your muhabbat and (this is my request to You), grant me the rizq of the muhabbat of that person also whose muhabbat for You is an aid and assistance in attaining Your muhabbat.

The muhabbat one has for one’s sheikh exceeds the muhabbat one has for everyone else living on earth. This muhabbat is thus a powerful force in attaining the muhabbat of Alláh Ta’álá.

You will now come to realise how important and how necessary it is to appoint someone as one’s muslih and sheikh and with what care this should be done.

All this has been established just from one mas’alah – the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه coming to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and departing with tremendous firmness

and strength, which he would not have attained had he not come.

Secondly: Mixing with others brings about weakness

The second point that can be established is as follows: After leaving the company of one's sheikh and returning home where one mixes with friends and relatives, being far away now, a decline sets in and one's previous condition tends to reappear. The internal strength developed in the company of one's sheikh tends to show some weakness. This manifests itself as milán – an inclination towards bad or evil. This was seen in the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه as well. However, his stay with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم was such and his calibre was such that he ignored this milán – the inclination towards evil.

Do you understand?

This milán, this inclination towards evil, this attraction towards harám, this drawing towards what is forbidden, in itself does not fall into the category of being "mamnú' " (forbidden). One is not accountable for this inner inclination. It does happen that one reaches a stage that such urges do not arise at all, but there is no law that says that they will never arise.

It follows that – Alláh forbid! – if it happens to a sálik, that he is inadvertently drawn to what is harám, he should not panic. He should not feel grieved. He should not lose hope. He should never, but never, consider all his struggles along the path of Sulúk, all his mujáhadah and riyádhát (striving and spiritual exercises), to be useless.

If the sálik has not stayed with a muhaqqiq and has not tried to learn from the lessons expounded, he will be terrified. He will then consider his efforts to have been of no use. He will tell himself. "What have I achieved? Nothing! I am back to square one." He will be filled with regret. "My whole life has been wasted!" It should not happen – Alláh forbid! – that he now starts sinning openly!

However, that sálik who has sat with a sheikh, a muhaqqiq, one who discussed different aspects of Sulúk, one who enunciated the principles of Sulúk, the masá'il of Tasawwuf, together with an in-depth analysis of the bátin, such a sálik will understand. Such a sálik is not one who sat with head bent down in muráqabah in a halqah, merely for the tawajjuh of the

sheikh to fall on him;, but the sálik I am speaking of is one who listened attentively to the discourses of the sheikh and imbibed the lessons therein. He will immediately understand. He will tell himself: "This is merely an inclination, a milán, an instinctive urge. Such urges will come and go. Why should I pay any attention? Why trouble myself? Pooh! La-howla-walá-qúwata..."

This "Pooh!" that is directed at this milán is said in a tone of utter contempt. He is contemptuous of his own nafs that it should come up with such urges. This "Pooh!" is another way of saying: "Why should I take notice of such despicable urges from my nafs?" This "Pooh!" results in even greater firmness within himself. When this process is adopted every time there is milán and the milán is ignored with a contemptuous "Pooh!" then, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, a stage will come when there will be no milán whatsoever – the inclinations will stop!

Effort and results: the focus of one's gaze is Alláh Ta'álá

This stage will be attained by the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá and not through your own efforts. I repeat: not through your efforts, but through the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá. The moment you consider attainment of this stage to be solely a personal achievement, Alláh Ta'álá will put you to the test! "Oh! Is that your attitude? We shall soon put you to trial."

Alláhu-Akbar! Dear brother! What will happen if the gaze of Alláh Ta'álá moves away from a person? Because this person had his gaze fixed at all times and on all occasions on Alláh Ta'álá he, in turn, earned the special attention of Alláh Ta'álá. This was a special favour of Alláh Ta'álá being showered on the servant.

If somebody who is small attracts the special attention of an elder, then, Sub-hán-Alláh! If this person is indifferent to this favour, then it is a sign of lack of appreciation and is also ingratitude. He should not be surprised if he does not remain in the elder's good books and lands up in his bad books and be put to the test.

Never should one attribute to oneself any good that has resulted from one's efforts. Any inclination towards good, any performance of good deeds, any laudable quality becoming established within oneself, any good

attribute becoming second nature, should never, but never, be considered to be the results of one's own efforts, but one's gaze should be fixed on Haqq.

When Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم himself has stated thus, how can his Musalmán ummat be excluded? Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم requested from Alláh Ta'álá:

اَللّٰهُمَّ هٰذَا الْجُهْدُ

O Alláh! This endeavour is from me ...

The different meanings of the word "jihád"

The term *"jad-wa-jehd"* means: *toil and labour / endeavour and effort.* From this root word many other words take their form:

Jihád – to fight in the Path of Alláh Ta'álá;

Ijtihád – earnest effort/authoritative interpretation.

Mujtahid – juror.

Mujáhid – one waging jihád.

The first enemy to make jihád against is one's nafs. A mujáhid is, therefore, one who makes jihád against his nafs. The nafs has to be crushed. This is what happens in jihád, that the nafs is trampled to dust.

When waging jihád, the most daring of big foes may be attacking one on the battlefield, one will be able to meet him fearlessly. On condition!

What is this condition? The condition is that one has already been waging a continuous war against a bigger and more daring foe, fighting strenuously, in a masterly and professional manner, bringing this foe into captivity. This foe being none other than one's warring, stubborn and rebellious nafs! Such a mujáhid, who holds his nafs in captivity, need fear no foe on the battlefield, no matter how unassailable he may appear.

So, the foe, the enemy to tackle, is one's nafs. Why fear the nafs? Learn how to do battle with the nafs. Learn how to make mujáhadah against the nafs in the correct manner, under the watchful eye of an ustád, with his guidance, staying with him, with muhabbat for him in your heart. Then only will you achieve something.

As we were saying, Rasúlulláh's صلی الله علیه وسلم gaze was on Haqq Ta'álá all the time. Even after making an effort, Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم pleads with Alláh Ta'álá:

اَللّٰهُمَّ هٰذَا الْجُهْدُ وَعَلَيْكَ التُّكْلَانُ

O Alláh! This effort, this endeavour is from my side. However, my gaze is not on it – my dependence is on You.

That is why I have said: Do not look at your own efforts. Fix your gaze on Alláh Ta'álá. If the milán disappears completely, this is the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá. We have mentioned the qissah of the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه who stayed in the company of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and then went back home. The urge to commit sin arose in him, but the awareness of his stay with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم was dominant and the urge to sin was overcome. By the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá, the urge disappeared. Similarly, the effect of staying with one's sheikh is that an awareness of him prevails even in his absence. Thus, when this milán arises, this awareness causes one to ignore the urge.

This milán, this welling up of an urge to sin, is not evil as long as it remains an urge only and does not express itself in deeds. On the contrary, this milán is not a bad thing, but is of benefit at that particular time. Take careful note of the words being used!

How so? The reason being that this milán, as long as it remains merely an urge, spurs one onto greater mujáhadah – one's mujáhadah becomes more powerful. The internal battle proceeds as follows: "Oho! The urge is there again. This is evidence of weakness. This attraction towards wrong and evil, towards what is forbidden and what is harám, is a sign of weakness. However, not to fear! I have come from such a place of strength that will enable me to ignore all such urges and inclinations."

To repeat: It is not mamnú' for milán to arise – one is not accountable for urges that arise spontaneously within oneself. On the contrary, for some – for the tálibe-sádiq – for that person sincerely seeking his isláh – this milán becomes the basis for becoming more firm and sound in the crushing of the nafs. The tálibe-sádiq progresses rapidly in Sulúk and Tasawwuf to that stage where this milán ceases completely.

To understand this concept better, let us sit back for a while and take the following situation:

That person who has performed hajj – that mu'min who, through the demands of his ímán and ihtisáb (as is mentioned in Bukhárí Sharíf: "Ímánan-wa-ihtisában") has undertaken the journey to Baitulláh to perform hajj as it should be performed – what is his state there? In the sanctity of the Harám Sharíf, in the awe-inspiring precincts of Baitulláh, this mu'min is so overawed that his passions, his desires, are virtually non-existent. He has absolutely no milán. Women not observing purdah move all around him. Right in front of his eyes these, women may greet one another, kissing each other's cheeks or foreheads or clutching one another to their bosoms, but this mu'min is in the shadow of Ka'bah Sharíf! Despite seeing all this, he has no milán. There is not even a trace of any desires rising in him.

Is my voice reaching you? Listen carefully now:

If this is the effect on him of seeing Ká'batulláh before his very eyes, can you imagine what the effect will be on him of having the thought of Alláh Ta'álá just as vividly in his heart? If seeing Ká'batulláh has extinguished his passions: "seeing" Alláh Ta'álá will affect him even more so!

This "seeing" Alláh Ta'álá is a state that is attained when the tongue is busy with an abundance of zikr, with ru'ate-muráqabah-ihsán (the contemplation of Alláh Ta'álá seeing one) and with the heart being involved with shaghl-be-Haqq, so that the concept of Alláh Ta'álá being hádhir-názir becomes a hál. If this is his state, then there is no question of milán troubling him.

So, the sálik has been progressing, slowly, slowly, when suddenly the old urges come back. Frightened and panic-stricken, he rushes to his sheikh. Soon the fear and panic are gone, for he has now heard from his sheikh that one is not accountable for this milán as long as these urges do not express themselves in deeds. One is accountable for deeds. He has learnt how to deal with milán. He now scoffs at these urges, saying: "Pooh!" in disparaging tone's, paying no further attention to them. Using this technique each time and ignoring these urges soon, by the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá – not by his own cleverness – the milán also ceases. His gaze is on Alláh Ta'álá.

Just see, even the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه had milán developing in him once

he was away from the saintly court and company of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Thereafter, his being absent was the same as being present. Being far away, yet he was near. Do you understand? Urges arising is not a sign of failure. Ignoring these urges is a sign of success.

These are problems faced by the sálik. Some write to me, others inform me verbally. "When I was there with Hadhrat, my state was unique. But, on returning home, I detect a weakness creeping into me," That is why these topics are discussed with you. Who stays all his life with his sheikh? Nobody.

'Ilm and not kitábs will be with the student all the time

Similarly, one may ask: Which student is going to sit all his life in the classroom? No student. Also, no student is going to carry around his kitábs with him all his life. No. The 'ilm that he had been grounded in during his student days, the depth of that knowledge, the perfection of that knowledge, the mastery over that knowledge, these will remain with him all the time. Not the kitábs. If the capability and proficiency are with him, it is as if the kitábs are with him, even though the kitábs are in the library.

Imám Ghazálí's رحمة الله عليه encounter with a gang of robbers

That is why the experience of Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه is a valuable lesson. Ay-yuhat-tulláb! Listen carefully!

Having completed his studies, Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه was en route back home. On the way, the caravan in which he was travelling was waylaid by robbers. Together with his co-travellers Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه was dispossessed of all his goods. Among his possessions were the carefully written notes of the lectures delivered by his ustáds. These notes were also taken by the robbers. Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه sought out the leader of the band of robbers and pleaded with him: "Your men have taken all my possessions except for the clothes I wear. You may keep the extra clothes and other valuables – I do not lament their loss. However, please ask your men to return the papers they have taken."

The leader of the band of robbers was amazed at this unusual request. This young man was not worried about clothes and valuables, but he was

asking for some pieces of paper to be returned!

Very curious, he asked: “What papers are these?”

Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه explained: “I am a student returning home after completing my studies. When my ustáds used to lecture, I used to make notes. These are those very pages of ’ilm that I am requesting to be returned to me.”

The leader of the robbers said: “What you have just said fills me with great sorrow and regret. Young lad! Is your ’ilm on pieces of paper when it should have been in your heart? Papers can get lost. Papers can be destroyed by fire, become parched by the sun, get eaten by moths, become damaged with damp and so forth. You are dependent on papers? It fills me with great pity. Your ’ilm should be in your heart! Be that as it may, your papers will be returned.”

He summoned one of his men and ordered him: “Give back to this boy his papers.” The notes were retrieved and returned to Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه

Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه was of noble character. He was, moreover, a dedicated student. The words of the gang-leader were like a knife piercing his heart. On reaching home, he lost no time in memorising all his notes!

Do you understand? ’Ilm may be present on paper and in kitábs, but can you carry these around with you? However, if that ’ilm is learnt in a capable way, that it is present in the heart, in perfection and depth, then ’ilm is present, even though the kitábs are absent.

If later, as an ustád, he has to teach a lesson, the students are then wonder-struck at his capable presentations. “Sub-hán-Alláh! With what ease has he not laid open the topic! How simple has he not made that complicated subject, with sufficient illustrating examples. Má-shá-Alláh!”

Ta’lím of the sheikh: from qál to hál

Coming back to the topic of Alláh Ta’álá being hádhir-názir: The ta’lím of abundance of zikr, of muráqabát and of ashghál of shaghl-be-Haqq, are at that level where they become the means and methods of producing in the heart a hál, a state, of this i’tiqád of Alláh Ta’álá being hádhir-názir. That is why Mauláná Rúmí رحمة الله عليه says:

Leave your talk and become a man of the time – annihilate yourself

[become dust] in front of one who is kámil (perfect/ accomplished).

Do not misunderstand: Fine, carry on... But what I am asking is: When is the qál (talk) going to become hál (state)? Is qál going to be merely on your lips, merely words? When is the qál going to descend from your lips and become hál in your heart? This hál should be embedded in the heart. It has to become so grounded that it does not leave the heart, that it does not slip out. This is the meaning of hál.

So, such a person, having reached this state through mujáhadah, through toil and effort, will not have his gaze turned on himself, but will have his gaze fixed on Záte-Haqq Ta'álá. He does not look at his own endeavours. If he does, then he has failed and the very next thing that happens is that Alláh Ta'álá puts him to the test. Alláh Ta'álá is aware of the condition of one's heart. He will show one up very quickly.

Different forms of nazare-bid

A simple walk through the city and its bazárs is sufficient to test him. Where are his eyes straying?

- Eyes filled with greed and avarice (hirs and tamá) latch onto various displays.
- A desire for fame and prestige (jáh) now sparkle in his eyes.
- His eyes betray the jealousy (hasad) at the grandeur that others possess.

Those eyes of his have given him away for they conceal nazare-bid – eyes with evil intent. This nazare-bid includes all of the above. We labour under the misconception that nazare-bid only means to look lasciviously at some female or handsome young male. No! The term nazare-bid includes much more – it includes looking with eyes of greed and avarice, looking with eyes of jealousy, looking with a desire for fame and prestige, as well as looking with lust. The basic evil intent in the eyes is nazare-bid. The evil intent may manifest in different ways, only one of which is to look at some female or handsome youth with lust. We have wrongly restricted this term to the last situation, but nazare-bid means looking with hirs or tamá, with desire for jáh, with hasad or with lust.

So, the belief and conviction of our ímán of Alláh Ta'álá being hádhir-

názir is still only at the level of qál, at the level of 'ilme-yaqín, but not at the level of hál. And the objective is to reach the level of hál. That is why it is said:

Leave your talk and become a man of the time – annihilate yourself
[become dust] in front of one who is kámil (perfect/ accomplished).

These important concepts are being laid before you for your attention. Remember:

نہ کتابوں سے نہ وعظوں سے نہ زر سے پیدا
دین ہوتا ہے بزرگوں کی نظر سے پیدا

Neither from kitábs, nor from lectures, nor from wealth is the Dín brought alive.

Dín is brought alive from the attention given by the buzurgs.

This is the reality (haqíqat) of a sheikh, that he expounds the haqá'iq (truths). The mas'alah of Sulúk that has been brought to your attention is:

اپنے شیخ کو یکسا سمجھو حاضراً وغائباً

Have the same consideration for your sheikh, whether present or absent.

This concept has been stated very well by Mauláná Rúmí رحمة الله عليه. By the way, do not think that these verses of Mauláná Rúmí رحمة الله عليه are a substitute for reciting Qur'án Sharíf. No. These verses are kalám-mubálaga-àmez – using hyperbole to draw one's attention to and emphasise what is in the Qur'án Sharíf.

Make an orchard, a garden. Where? *In your heart.* From what? *From Núr!* Whose? *From Haqq*:

Make an orchard, a garden in your chest of Núr from Haqq.

Alláh Ta'álá has also referred to Himself metaphorically as Núr (Spiritual Resplendence):

اَللّٰهُ نُورُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ؕ

Alláh is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (S.24.35.)

Therefore, when Mauláná Rúmí رحمة الله عليه refers to seeking Haqq in one's chest, he is speaking colloquially, for Alláh Ta'álá is not confined to space

or time. Záte-Haqq is everywhere. The same idiom is used by Alláh Ta'álá elsewhere in a Hadíth-e-Qudsí:

لَا يَسَعُنِيْ اِلَّا قَلْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

I can never be accommodated at any place, except the heart of a mu'min.

This can only happen if that mu'min utilises the correct procedures for this to happen. Try it. Use the correct methods and then see!

The formula for enjoying life

Then you can start enjoying life! Then you will find delight in your family, delight in your employment, delight in your eating and drinking. In sleeping there will be delight, in waking there will be delight and in going about your chores there will be delight.

Why? Because in each activity you will discover the delight and pleasure of 'ibádat! And the purpose, the objective for which Alláh Ta'álá has created us is for His 'ibádat!

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ ۝

And I have not created the Jinn and Mankind except that they should worship Me. (S.51.56)

This is the theme with which we had commenced. So, except for the six to seven hours reserved for sleep, the remaining 17 to 18 hours that insán has, are fully and completely for the 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá.

In conclusion

The theme this morning has been on objectives. It is only appropriate to state that the objective of this talk was to outline the purpose of the creation of insán – that insán has been created for 'ibádat. When insán fulfils this objective and fills his 17 to 18 hours with ibádat, the six to seven hours reserved for sleep also become ibádat, because those six – seven hours are to refresh that insán for 'ibádat during the remaining 17 – 18 hours. It follows that insán's whole life, both waking and sleeping, is for 'ibádat.

Do you understand?

With the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá and fadhl and karam of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of Hadhratwálá, today's talk on "objectives" has been presented to you. May Alláh Ta'álá cause, with 'aqle-salím and 'aqle-mustaqím, this concept of the creation of ádmí, to settle firmly in our hearts; and may He grant us the taufíq to live our 24 hours in 'ibádat, which is the purpose of our creation.

A LESSON IN SPEAKING

[Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *used to say that a sheikh gives an all-round training. He even teaches one how to speak. Just prior to the above majlis, a visitor had come to meet Hadhratjí* رحمة الله عليه*. The last part of this conversation is also recorded on tape and is being reproduced.]*

[Addressing those in the majliskhánah, Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *said:]*

This visitor has come to meet me. When he came, I asked: "What is the purpose of coming here?" He replied: "To meet Hadhrat." I asked: "From where have you come?" He replied: "From Bengal." I said: "All the way from Bengal, to meet me? This causes me some astonishment and apprehension, that someone should come all the way from Bengal directly here merely to meet me," However, on further questioning, it turned out that he came from Bengal to Sulelábád, which is near here and had decided to come here to meet me also.

From previous experiences I have come to realise that often people come to Thánah Bhawan or some other place nearby and then come here, but on questioning them, they reply that they have come from Bombay, or somewhere else. One should always speak clearly and completely.

[Turning to the visitor, Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *said:]*

You should have said: "I am a resident of Bengal and came to visit a friend in Sulelábád. I had a desire to meet Hadhrat as well and came here." Very well. It is a happy occasion to meet you as well. I have no objection to meeting visitors.

One may have heard from friends, or others, that such and such a person is a buzurg and one desires to meet him. Whether he is a buzurg or not, is beside the point, as long as one's thinking ('aqídah) is there. One's niyet is important. There is a great reward in having a good intention. Alláh Ta'álá knows one's niyet. For every step you take, you get thawáb.

اِنَّمَا الْاَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَاِنَّمَا لِامْرِءٍ مَّا نَوٰى

Verily, deeds depend on niyets. Each individual will be rewarded according to his niyet.

However, my amazement was at the fact that he should come from Bengal straight here merely to meet me. These comments are made for the lesson contained in them.

[Hadhratjí made du'á for the visitor and made the necessary arrangements for his stay there.]

WASÍYET

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

[The wasíyet that Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *gave on 17/10/92 has already been published elsewhere. This wasíyet is being reproduced here as it contains advice of immeasurable value.]*

[Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *said:]*

I can hardly muster enough courage to stir my tongue, weakness having sapped my strength to this extent. It is with great difficulty that I speak. Even then, a few points need stating. Listen attentively.

Take care to perform good deeds with istiqámat, always with good character and good speech. Also, take care to take it upon yourself to perform namáz, keep rozah and perform what is sunnah and mustahab, taking into account your health and ease of performance. In the same way zikr and tiláwat should continue, taking into account opportunity and ease of performance.

Take care to continue in your studying of kitábs. This is very necessary. Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه "*Sharí'at and Taríqat*" and Imám Ghazálí's رحمة الله عليه

Arabic *"Tablíqh-ud-Dín"* (the Urdú translation), one should make obligatory on oneself to read. Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه used to prescribe these kitábs to great, great 'ulemá, with much emphasis.

Also, Hadhratwálá's رحمة الله عليه commentary *"Bayán-al-Qur'án"* should be studied.

Avoid all sinful deeds, to the extent of refraining from anything doubtful, as it appears in Bukhárí Sharíf:

اَلْحَلَالُ بَيِّنٌ وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ فَاسْتَنْزِهُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْتَبِهَاتِ

What is halál is clear and what is harám is clear; and in-between the two is what is doubtful. Stay away from what is doubtful.

You should be very desirous of attaining the akhláqe-hamídah and you should remove the akhláqe-razílah and develop a sense of distaste for the latter

The effect of this would be that you attain husne-kalám (good speech) and husne-khulq (good character) and that you maintain these states. The meaning of husne-kalám is that words should be decent and cultured (polite/affable), spoken with a soft voice. The meaning of husne-khulq is that one should have hilm which, in our language, we call burdabárí (tolerance/forbearance). Whenever somebody says anything against your temperament, something which offends you, make light of it by using husne-kalám, with burdabárí, according to the statement of Alláh Ta'álá:

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوْا عَنْهُ

And when they hear vain talk they withdraw from it (S.28.55.)

So, whenever you are in such a situation, put it off honourably. Do not sit at such a place or involve yourself in that activity which may be the reason for your being slandered, as it appears in the Hadíth Sharíf.

اِتَّقُوْا مَوَاضِعَ التُّهَمِ

Abstain from places/ occasions of slander.

You have not been told to save yourself from slander, but you are to save yourself from such places and such activities which may cause you to be

a target of slander.

[After a pause, Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه continued:]

My guide and mentor, Hadhrat Hakímul-Ummat, Mujaddide-Millat,رحمة الله عليه, used to say: "There are two words, one is 'Dhiyán' and the other 'Dhun' to take note of. Dhiyán is that, at all times, sitting, standing, walking about, the thought of Alláh Ta'álá should be in you. Dhun is that tazkíyah nafs (the purification of the nafs) should at all times be an obsession." These two words are most onerous. Continuously act on them.

Do not involve yourself in the affairs of others. Keep yourself aloof from the affairs of others. (To intrude into the affairs of others) is contrary to the honour and dignity (shán) of mashikhiyet.

Abundance of zikr should be recited in such a way that the tongue makes zikr with every breath and the heart is grateful (shákir) to Alláh Ta'álá for the taufíq for zikr and obedience.

Keep dealings (mu'ámulát) and transactions completely correct, clear and clean.

Enough! These are a few words, by way of wasíyet, which I wish to mention. Despite the fact that I do not have enough courage and strength to muster then, too, by the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá, this wasíyet has been made.

[The following morning, after the Fajr namáz, Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه repeated:]

Good deeds should be performed continuously, with istiqámat, with husne-kalám and husne-khulq; with soft, polite words, as Bárí-Ta'álá has stated:

وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوا الَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Tell My bondmen to speak that which is kindlier. (S.17.53.)

With husne-kalám and husne-khulq, whenever any incident takes place, contrary to your temperament, offending you, pass it off with husne-kalám, with soft words, with husne-khulq. Bárí-Ta'álá has stated:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better (S.41.34.)

Adopt hilm (forbearance) or let it pass in silence. Bárí-Ta'álá has

stated:

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوْا عَنْهُ

And when they hear vain talk they withdraw from it (S.28.55.)

Husne-khulq is a great thing. Huzúre-Akram صلى الله عليه وسلم had asked the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم: "Shall I show you that thing that is better than a person making 'ibádat the whole night and keeping rozas every day, for a full year?" The sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم asked: "O Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم، what is that?" Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Husne-khulq. This is a much greater thing." Then Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم asked: "Shall I show you something even better than that?" The sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم pondered: "What could be better than that?" They then requested Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم to show them.

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "To have husne-khulq with your wife – to treat her with softness."

This is because one continuously comes across such things contrary to one's temperament from one's wife. In the same way, approach your relatives and friends, even your enemy, with husne-khulq.

In conclusion:

This is sufficient. Be punctual with and be drawn towards good deeds, with husne-khulq and husne-kalám. And refrain from evil deeds, with feelings of distaste for them. And let your tongue be zákir and your heart be shákir.

Cleansing of the nafs and rectification of the nafs should be an obsession (dhun); and the dhiyán of Alláh Ta'álá: What has been outlined is the whole summary, the essence, of Tasawwuf. This is sufficient. Continually act on it. These are the noble statements of my murshid Hakím-al-Ummat Mujaddid-al-millet, Mauláná Mohammed Ashraf 'Alí Sáhib Thánwí رحمة الله عليه.

BOOKLET NUMBER SEVEN

Rabiul-Awwal 1415 – August 1994

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Alhamdulilláh, through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our Sheikh رحمة الله عليه, this seventh booklet is now ready.

It is important always to keep one's perspectives correct. One's sheikh's guidance is absolutely essential in this respect. It is thus appropriate to reproduce some basic points in connection with one's isláh, for neglect of these fundamental usúls may hinder progress.

In a kitáb recently published, called "Hayátus-sálik," some of Hadhratjí's correspondence with those desirous of their isláh, is published. Right in the beginning is a request by a qualified álim for Hadhratjí to note down the pre-conditions that are necessary for isláh of one's character.

Hadhratjí's reply:

Bismihí Ta'álá.

Conditions (to be observed by a) tálibe-isláh:

1. Ikhlás right in the beginning, by correcting one's intention (niyet.)

2. Taubah. Performance of two rak'ats of taubah. In the first rak'at recite Súrah "Qul-Yá-ayyuhal-káfirún" and in the second rak'at "Izá-já'.

3. After the salátat-taubah recite one tasbíh of istighfár.

4. Thereafter, lift your hands and repent from the bottom of your heart: make taubah for past sins, with a promise (not to commit sins in the future).

5. If you have any namáz and/or rozah that are qadhá, take proper care to perform these.

6. If you have any material rights (of others) to fulfil, see to these, otherwise request to be forgiven (if unable to see to your obligations financially).

7. If you have over-stepped the limits with anybody, either verbally or physically, then go and ask to be forgiven.

8. Observe caution in the matter of association with others.

9. Have complete faith and confidence (i'tiqád-o-i'timád) and be punctual and regular in informing (your mentor of your state and problems) and in carrying out his instructions (ittilá'-o-ittibá' ká iltizám.)
10. Be conscious of ikhlás and sidq in each and every action and when you are informing (your mentor).
11. Unless there is a very great need, observe silence; and make seclusion something to be loved. And observe complete avoidance of beardless youths (amárad) and observe great caution with regard to them: Have a feeling of detestation in having to give them any occasion to be alone with you; and avoid, as far as possible, taking any work from them.

Point nine – communicating with one's sheikh – cannot be over emphasised. Progress is dependent on this, yet it is most neglected. It must be emphasised again, that these booklets, "For Friends", are not meant to be a substitute for a mentor. Direct communication with a spiritual guide is still essential.

May Alláh Ta'álá give us all clarity of understanding and also the taufíq to make amal on the teachings of our sheikh رحمة الله عليه. Ámín.
Dr.I.M.

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

[This is a translation of a majlis-e-khás held by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه*, in Jalálábád, India, on the 29th March 1992, corresponding to the 23rd Ramadhán, 1412]*

THE NAFS

For the tálibe-Haqq (the seeker of Truth) *three steps* have been mentioned as essential.

Basírat (clarity of understanding) – the first step

The first step mentioned is as follows:

The understanding (fehem) in the tálibe-Haqq first gets rectified. In that person who is really seeking Truth with complete sincerity, Haqq Ta'álá

says that the first and most important event to take place is that his understanding becomes clear.

If this does not happen, that is, he does not develop clear understanding, then, in the true sense of the word, he is not a seeker of Haqq. Thus, this clarity of understanding is a sign, a proof, a witness and it stands as evidence.

This clarity of understanding is spoken of in the Qur'án Sharíf as "basá'ir". In other words: "basírat". Alláh Ta'álá states:

هٰذَا بَصَآئِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُوْنَ ۝

This is clear indication for mankind and a guidance and a mercy for a people whose faith is sure. (S.45.20.)

"This kitáb which We have revealed, whoever reads it or listens to it with understanding, with talab of Haqq, seeking Haqq, then this person develops basírat." This is then manifested as rectification of understanding or thinking (fehem.) This is the first recognisable step.

Hidáyet (guidance) – the second step

With this rectification of his thinking and understanding, progressively and steadily, his heart starts to accept and also to act according to the laws of the Sharí'at. He girds himself firmly for this.

This stage is termed as "hidáyet" (guidance) in the Qur'án Sharíf. A methodology for this hidáyet, in the context of deeds (a'mál) appears in him. The Qur'án Sharíf explains this with the word "hudan" – that is, hidáyet.

So, if this person has not attained hidáyet – if he has not established within himself the obedience to the Orders of the Sharí'at – then it is obvious that he has not even attained the first step of basírat.

This is the sequence: first comes basírat and then comes hidáyet

The external (záhir) is a testimony of what is inside (bátin). It is evident that hidáyet – what in the true sense can be termed hidáyet – has, as yet, not come into this person.

Qurb-wa-qabúl (closeness and acceptance) – the third step

However, if both these – basírat and hidáyet – have developed, now the fruits will be seen. The fruits are qurb and qabúl (closeness and acceptance). The Qur'án Sharíf has termed this stage as "rahmat".

So, initially there is basírat, which is followed by hidáyet and then comes rahmat.

So, obviously, when clarity of understanding enters and it results in the development of hidáyet – when these two priceless gems have been attained – then why should Alláh Ta'álá's special rahmat not be focused on him? Why should Alláh Ta'álá's special favours not be directed towards him?

It is Haqq Ta'álá who has stated that the fruits, the nett result, of attaining the first two stages is rahmat. In other words Haqq Ta'álá is saying: "In My eyes, his voice is qabúl, he has qurb and, therefore, he is maqbúl (accepted)!"

What a wonderful thing has not been stated by Záte-Bárí Ta'álá about that mu'min whose ímán is good: namely, that firstly the understanding of the tálibe-Haqq gets corrected, which is termed attaining basírat; then the heart accepts the ahkám (orders of the Sharí'at) and the tálibe-Haqq walks along these ahkám, which is termed attaining hidáyet.

Thus far two things have happened: Basírat has appeared and, when clarity of understanding comes, ignorance disappears; and, secondly, hidáyet has manifested itself and when this happens he walks steadily along the sirátul-mustaqím.

Let us pause to ponder. Know yourself! Question yourself! Has the correct hidáyet come into me or not?

To continue: When basírat has entered, resulting in hidáyet appearing, the nett result will be that their fruits will appear, namely qurb and qabúl, that is, rahmat.

The tálibe-Haqq, the tálibe-tazkíyah, the tálibe-isláh, when he obviously has ikhlás in him, has compulsorily to appraise himself, to judge himself, to assess himself and to ask himself continuously: "What is the state, the specific quality, of my nafs?"

The nafs has three states

In the Qur'án Sharíf Záte-Bárí Ta'álá has narrated three states of the nafs:

1. The *first state* is called *ammárah-bis-sú'*. Mention is made of this state in the Qur'án Sharíf, in Súrah Yúsuf:

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوٓءِ

Verily, the nafse-ammárah incites to evil. (S.12.53.)

2. A *second type,* a second condition of the nafs, the *nafse-lowwámah,* has been mentioned in the twenty-ninth pårá, in Súrah Qiyámah:

وَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ۝

Nay, I swear by the reproaching soul. (S.75.2.)

3. The *third type*, the third condition of the nafs, the *nafse-mutma'innah,* has been mentioned in the thirtieth pårá, in Súrah Fajr:

يَآ أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۝

O Soul that has attained tranquillity. (S.89.27.)

These are the three types, the three conditions of the nafs, narrated by Alláh Tabárak-wa-Ta'álá in the Qur'án Sharíf:

(1) Nafse-ammárah-bis-sú';
(2) Nafse-lowwámah; and
(3) Nafse-mutma'innah.

Now it is important to know and understand all three states of the nafs.

As we said just now, the tálibe-Haqq develops, firstly, clarity of understanding (basírat.) With this new-found understanding the tálibe-Haqq should ponder and say to himself:

"Alláh Ta'álá has narrated three states of the nafs in the Qur'áne Pák. Therefore, I should come to know, come to understand and come to recognise which is the type of nafs I possess. Do I possess nafse-ammárah, nafse-lowwámah, or nafse-mutma'innah?"

There is now initiated in the tálibe-Haqq a search and an introspection.

This process is the natural outcome and demand of the basírat that has developed in him. If this process does not occur, then this person is not a tálibe-Haqq in the real meaning of what a seeker of Haqq should be. He is not a tálibe-tazkíyah in the real sense of the words. He is not a tálibe-isláh in the real sense of the words.

So, that tálibe-Haqq who has clarity of understanding (basírat), which is the first attainment, should ponder and ask himself: "Seeing that Alláh Ta'álá has mentioned three states of the nafs, in which category does my nafs fall? As far as Alláh Ta'álá is concerned, which nafs is one's objective, to be attained fully and correctly? Then I, as a mu'min, should strive to attain that same objective that Záte-Bárí Ta'álá has laid down, as a requirement of my ímán."

Brothers, is my voice reaching you?

One has to recognise what has been stated above. And this process of introspection and questioning must continue until one has in one's mind that same gaze that Záte-Bárí Ta'álá has: His gaze is on the nafse-mutma'innah and that is where one's gaze should also be fixed.

Nafse-ammárah-bis-sú'

So, the tálibe-Haqq starts taking work from his new-found understanding and he takes stock of himself: "Oho! My temperament is drawing me towards amusement and play, of which it has been said,

كُلُّ لَهْوٍ حَرَامٌ

All amusement and play is harám.

How has he analysed himself? How has he come to the conclusion that his tabiyet (temperament) is drawing him to amusement and play? This is his introspective process:

"My tabiyet does not draw me towards good deeds. Never mind being attracted to good deeds, there is not even the slightest inclination towards good deeds. To the contrary, my tabiyet pushes me to bad and evil. It does so to such an extent that I do not even feel bad or upset within myself at doing bad!

"Whenever I am involved in anything, one can be sure it is some evil! When it is time to do some good, my tabiyet turns away and inclines towards evil. When it is time for namáz, my tabiyet does not incline towards namáz – my tabiyet draws me to that which is the direct opposite, some or other evil – and I actually do that evil!

"It is obvious that evil does not upset me and that there is no inclination on my part towards good at the time of having to do some good. So, it is obvious that I have in me nafse-ammárah. This is how it is recognised. This is its mode of action. This is how it works!"

Nafse-ammárah-bis-sú'. There is a qualifying suffix to the word "ammárah" and that is "bis-sú' ". Why so? The answer is: because the nafse-ammárah has the special quality that it is involved in evil – sú' means evil – and it does not incline towards good. To this extent, that when somebody tries to advise him then, too, good is considered to be evil and evil is considered to be good! This is the degree of disturbed thinking that a person has when he is in this state.

"Ofo!" This tálibe-Haqq tells himself: "Being a mu'min, yet this is the state of my nafs, that I shy away from good and am drawn towards evil? Is this what my ímán demands of me, me being a mu'min?"

These are the symptoms and signs by which the nafse-ammárah-bis-sú' is recognised and identified. It is actually recognition of corrupted thinking.

Do you understand the concept?

So, this mu'min, because of the demand of the ímán in him, is now in deep thought. He is busy with introspection, weighing himself, assessing himself, judging himself against the criteria just outlined.

This process leads him to a stage where his intelligence and understanding come forward to support him. An apprehension arises within his heart. Warning bells sound. An alarm rings within him!

His new-found understanding (basírat) leads him forward: He comes to sense that certain things are good and certain things are bad; he comes to perceive the difference between beautiful and ugly; he comes to recognise evil as evil and comes to accept good as good.

Nafse-lowwámah

A change is noticed: He is now drawn towards good and he begins to shun what is evil. Now, whenever his tabiyet agitates and incites him into doing something wrong or evil, his basírat stops him – scolding him, reproaching him, taunting him and shaming him.

Within himself he is now feeling most reprehensible. Within himself he rebukes himself: "What a shameful thing! What a dishonourable act! What a pitiful creature you are! Your faith and belief, O mu'min, based on your ímán, is that Alláh Ta'álá is hádhir-názir, that He is present all the time; and yet you can stoop so low?" Thus he reproaches himself.

Basírat has come to him and his tabiyet now progresses towards hidáyet. He now inclines towards good and he now begins to distance himself from evil. He is proceeding along the road of hidáyet. Ammáriyet of the nafs is departing and lowwámiyet is entering.

The process continues. The basírat of this mu'min increases. More and more, his inclination is towards good. Involvement in evil causes his tabiyet to reproach himself more and more severely. He is all the time pre-occupied with this thought: What nafs is the nafs that is the objective as far as Záte-Bárí Ta'álá is concerned? He is in deep thought. Which is the nafs that is desired by Alláh Ta'álá?

This is the demand of the basírat that he has attained, when it is accompanied by hidáyet, with the faith and belief of Alláh Ta'álá being hádhir-názir, with taqwá entering the heart and a sense of shame establishing itself. "It must not happen that from my lips should come forth words of evil, that, despite my heart harbouring an intention to do good, some evil is manifested by me!"

This is the state of his heart. However, if this state has not arisen yet, then evil words will issue from his lips and any intention in his heart to do good will be substituted with evil. These are obvious indications that he is still on the verge of taqwá – taqwá has not entered as yet. Otherwise, the tongue would have been restrained and the heart would have been redirected.

Let us go further: The deeds the person is doing are good deeds. However, the cheerfulness that should have been present in his tabiyet is just not

there. The openness that should have been present in his disposition is just not there. Doing good is still burdensome – there is still some rancour in him. There is still being emitted the smell of shierk!

Have you heard my words?

The smell of shierk

To repeat: There is still the smell of shierk being emitted! It must not happen that this smell of shierk should spread and on his side this person is completely unconcerned!

It shows that the concept of Záte-Bárí Ta'álá being hádhir-názir, with the due honour and respect that this demands, has not been established. Otherwise, he would definitely have experienced some dread and he would have stopped his tongue and his heart from evil. As yet his carefreeness has not been curtailed – his tabiyet is still rampant.

Listen carefully to this incident related by Hadhratwálá and ponder over it.

There was a certain molvísáhib staying in Makkah mu'azzamah. He fell ill and passed away and was buried in Jannatul-Málá, the qabrastán of Makkah mu'azzamah.

Those going for hajj usually go to several places for ziyárat and one such place being Jannatul-Málá as well, where the hajís recite fátihah at the graves. Nowadays, there are certain restrictions, but in those days there was full permission to visit by day or night.

One such group of hajís, proceeding in this way, stopped at a certain grave to recite fátihah, when the thin top-covering of the grave suddenly caved in, revealing the body lying inside.

Looking into the grave, what did the people see? To their utter amazement, lying inside, they saw the body of a young Christian lady! What is this? No non-Muslims are even allowed into Makkah mu'azzamah. For them to stay there is forbidden. They had never heard of such a thing! So, how could a Christian girl come to be buried here?

In this group of hajís was present also a certain molvísáhib who was looking intently at the corpse. He recognised her. "This girl is from France!" he exclaimed in astonishment.

Is my voice reaching you, brothers?

فَاعْتَبِرُوْا يَآ أُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ – *So, learn a lesson, O you who have insight!*

The molvísáhib continued: "This girl is from France and I used to teach her the Dín. She had secretly become a Muslim. She passed away in my presence and she was subsequently buried there in France. How did she come to be here?"

On hearing this, some of the onlookers spoke up: "But a certain local molvísáhib was buried in this grave. And you are telling us that this girl passed away in France and that she was buried there! And her body now lies transposed here! It seems reasonable to suppose, then, that the molvísáhib's body has been transposed from here to France! This matter requires further investigation."

The group proceeded to the house of the deceased molvísáhib. One person went ahead and knocked on the door. The widow came to answer the knock. He asked of her: "Your husband, the late molvísáhib, can you tell us about him?"

She replied: "He was a very good man, má-shá-Alláh! He kept a beard and he was regular with his namáz and rozas."

The spokesman enquired further: "You did not take note of any... er... anything unusual? Just think a bit!"

The widow appeared perturbed: "But why are you asking?"

The spokesman tried to reassure her: "Nothing really. But just try and think a bit."

The poor widow complied and started thinking deeply. After some thought she spoke – listen very carefully now! She said: "One thing comes to mind. When in need of ghusl after janábat, my husband definitely used to bath (as required by the Sharí'at.) Yes, he definitely did perform this nék amal (good deed). However, at the same time he used to comment that if Islám did not have this order to make ghusl after janábat, it would have been a very good thing."

'Ibádat and taqwá

Are you listening? Making ghusl after janábat is a nék amal – a good deed

which merits thawáb. However, in his heart he harboured disapproval! His deed is one of ’ibádat, but without taqwá!

Ponder over this!

Like beauty and the beast: The beauty being the nék amal of making ghusl; the beast, the ugliness, was that which he harboured in his heart, the opinion that it would have been much better if Islám did not have this command to make ghusl after janábat. And what he kept in his heart issued forth from his lips!

The widow continued: “I kept on telling him: ‘Please don’t utter such words!’, but he never listened.”

The concept had become ingrained. His nafs was set towards ammáriyet – ammárah-bis-sú’. This sentence that came into his heart and issued from his lips, is it sú’ or is it khair (good)? Obviously it is sú’ (evil)! He was not repentant – he did not make taubah. When he passed away, he was buried in the local qabrastán in the very precincts of Makkah mu’azzamah.

On the other hand, there was this Christian girl, who, as her ustád had reported, had secretly brought ímán, hiding it from her parents and had been buried in France when she passed away there. Alláh Bárí Ta’álá took her body from the Dárul-Kufr of France and transposed it to the ground of Makkah mu’azzamah.

And the molvísáhib who was buried in the ground of Makkah mu’azzamah, in whose surroundings are sáleh people, was despatched to France. This was later confirmed.

Is there not a lesson to be learnt from this incident? Is it not something to ponder over?

Do you now recognise what is basírat? Do you understand what is clear understanding? Do you understand what it is to be a tálibe-Haqq and also its opposite? Because the first thing to happen to a tálibe-Haqq is that his understanding becomes clear, he develops basírat. Whereas, over here, there was no basírat. And who was he? A molvísáhib! Despite doing a deed that was nék inside him lurked the evil of shierk! The deed was performed, but with sú’.

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه related several illustrative incidents. Here follows another. The incident related previously was an eye-witness account. The

incident to be related now is in relation to a metaphysical occurrence in a dream.

The harm of imitation of others

A molvísáhib, punctual with his namáz and rozas, passed away. A pious person saw him in a dream, suffering the punishment of Jahannam in the Álame-Barzakh.

Quite astonished to see the molvísáhib there, he exclaimed: “You? You are in Jahannam? What brought this on?” The molvísáhib explained: “It happened as follows: It was the day of Holí.”

This is the Festival of Colours celebrated by the Hindus. On this day the ahle-hanúd and the mushrikín throw colouring on one another.

He continued: “It was the day of Holí. I had just had a meal and I was chewing some pán. I left home to go somewhere. While walking along I came across a donkey. I addressed the donkey: ‘Poor animal! Has nobody thrown any colouring on you? Come, let me colour you!’ So saying, I spat some pán-stained spittle on him, the red spittle making a vivid red splash on his coat. After my death, when my turn came to stand in front of Alláh Ta’álá (this is the kachí-péshí – the pre-trial), Haqq Ta’álá said: ‘Because you had imitated an action of the mushrikín, Therefore, your abode is Jahannam!’ ”

Are you listening? You know the Hadíth Sharíf:

مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

Whosoever imitates a nation will be among them.

You also know that the statements of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم are, in actual fact, Kaláme-Iláhí – the statements of Alláh Ta’álá. The Qur’án Sharíf states:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى ۗ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوْحىٰ ۙ

Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save a revelation that is revealed. (S.53.3-4.)

Further, Haqq Ta’álá Himself states in the Qur’án Sharíf:

وَلَا تَرْكَنُوْٓا إِلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ

And do not incline towards those who do wrong, for then the fire will touch you. (S.11.113.)

Alláh Ta'álá is saying: "O mu'mins! Do not let your hearts incline towards the zálims. The zálims are the mushrikín and the kuffár, who are showering zulm on themselves. Do not let your lifestyles be an imitation of their lifestyles..."

The word "yarkanú," in its grammatical application, implies all this.

"... lest the flames of Jahannam should reach you also. The mushrikín and the kuffár will be in the fire of Jahannam – this fire has been prepared specifically for them. Though you may not be punished as they are, nevertheless, is it to be taken lightly that the fire may reach you and, at that, the fire of Jahannam? What a severe situation to be in! Let it not be so!"

Ponder over this and adjust your lives, O mu'mins! Restrain yourselves from ammáriyet!

When he had acted thus, having spat his pán-stained spittle on the donkey, then he too had no awareness of the gravity of his action, of what is good and what is bad, of nékí and evil. There was no self-reproach. Lowwámiyet had not entered into him. Otherwise, there would have been taubah. His life then would have been of taqwá.

However, when he passed away he left with ammáriyet-bis-sú' and it was on this basis that he had earned for himself the Fire.

In different places in the Qur'án Sharíf Haqq Ta'álá sounds alarm bells. In connection with Jannat Alláh Ta'álá says:

أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ

(Jannat), prepared for those who ward off (evil).(S.3.133.)

Jannat has been prepared for those mu'mins who have taqwá. It has not been prepared for the kuffár – for them has been prepared the Fire.

فَاعْتَبِرُوْا يَآ أُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ – *So, learn a lesson, O you who have insight!*

How much is Alláh Ta'álá not desirous of the mu'min! How much rahmat is Alláh Ta'álá not favouring him with! Yes, the mu'min is being

made aware: Come out of ammáriyet. Enter into lowwámiyet. Adopt this transitional phase to whatever degree. If Haqq Ta'álá did not approve of this phase, why did Haqq Ta'álá then take qasm on it?

وَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ۝

Has Alláh Ta'álá not taken a qasm here? Obviously He has! Also, is a qasm taken on something disliked? Again, obviously not! Lowwámah is a desirous stage and approval is proportionate to the progress in it. Whereas ammáriyet is completely and absolutely disliked by Záte-Bárí Ta'álá. The phase of lowwámiyet is liked, yet it is also disliked because it is still a transitional phase.

Imagine, the heart of a mu'min and lowwámiyet should not enter it? That he should commit some bad deed and not feel horrible within himself? That he should do some good and not feel pleased within himself? Unbelievable!

These are simple ways of recognising lowwámiyet – bad deeds make his heart unhappy and good acts make his heart happy.

The standards of one's existence are being presented before you, O you mu'mins! You have to continuously judge yourselves against these standards. You have to keep on measuring yourselves against these criteria. Remember that the understanding of a tálibe-Haqq demands that he be "húshyár" (alert/ sensible/ wise).

So, that person whose nafs has entered into lowwámiyet now inclines towards goodness and piety. When he does any good his heart feels happy. He avoids what is bad and evil. And, should he do anything bad or evil, his heart feels shattered. He then scolds himself, he reproaches himself. This is because he now has an understanding of what is beautiful and what is ugly. The differentiation between good and evil has now set firmly into his heart.

He continues unrelentingly with this process of self-reproach until a stage is reached where the battle is won and bad and evil is overcome and goodness stands out victorious.

There is now an ever-increasing attraction towards goodness and piety and, by the same token, bad and evil are ever-increasingly hateful. Goodness

and piety are now close associates, whereas bad and evil are distanced away.

This process continues until there is such a firm association with goodness and piety, that it results in a tremendous attraction for these and a tremendous passion for them. On the other hand, his heart has a proportionately deepening distaste for bad and evil and a correspondingly deepening disgust.

To understand this, try to think of a person who is completely famished and almost starving – how is he not attracted towards food! This person's desire for goodness and piety is such.

His disgust for bad and evil is such as any cultured and sensitive person has an aversion to even the mention of the word "faeces" – even the mention of unbecoming words produces a revulsion in him.

His condition now is like that described in the noble words of the Qur'áne-Pák, where Haqq Ta'álá states:

بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوْقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيْمَانِ

(O you who believe!) ill is the name of sin after ímán! (S.49.11.)

As if to say: "O mu'min! Never mind sinning – that should be very far-fetched – after ímán even the mention of sin should not come to your lips! This is the degree of revulsion that you should have."

Refinement and culture in one's ímán

The refinement that is supposed to come in his ímán has not come, as yet. He is not cultured as yet.

For example: When answering the call of nature he should say: "I am going to the beitul-khalá (toilet.)" He should not blurt out: "I am going to defecate!"

Even the unsophisticated peasant has enough politeness to say: "I am taking a walk into the field," which is his way of saying that he is going to answer the call of nature.

But now, refinement has come into his ímán. The correct concern has been created. He is now particular and selective in his speech, taking note

of the finer points and of the subtleties. Now, even to bring a word to his lips denoting sin is also repulsive.

Do you understand?

Haqq Ta'álá is telling the mu'min that, after bringing ímán, even to take the name of sin is also disapproved, it is also an abomination.

So, this person, by reproaching his nafs again and again, again and again, has reached a stage where he has a tremendous attraction and passion for 'ibádat and for doing good. And, when unable to do these, he has developed the highest degree of sabr and tahammul.

Bad and evil deeds, which are connected to the nafs, have left him; and good deeds and good character, which are connected to the heart (qalb), have appeared.

As far as his ibádát are concerned, he makes a full effort – this is now ingrained in his tabiyet. His 'ibádat now glitters with the noble and dignified qualities of hilm and tahammul, of sabr and riyádhat.

Look: if one who is famished has some rotí in front of him and you try to snatch that rotí away from him, will he allow you to do so? Similarly, that person who has a passion for 'ibádat, at the time of 'ibádat, if anybody tries to take him away, will he allow him? And if somebody tries to drag him to some bad or evil, will he meekly go?

Company & friendship are to attain the muhabbat of Alláh Ta'álá

No, he will not allow either. By repeatedly reproaching himself, he has reached the stage where he now reproaches others for enticing him to bad and evil. But he reproaches the other person not with a holier-than-thou attitude, not with contempt, but out of affection. Out of a sense of duty he tells him: "What an amazing type of 'encouragement', when it should actually be considered disgustful. And you are trying to divert me from my ibádat, when you should have been encouraging me towards it. Should I leave my 'ibádat and do what is contrary? This is not friendship on your part, but enmity!"

Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم has said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يَّنْفَعُنِيْ حُبُّهُ عِنْدَكَ

O Alláh! Grant me the rizq of Your muhabbat, with depth; and grant me also the rizq of that person's muhabbat whose muhabbat will be an aid and assistance in attaining Your muhabbat.

It is also apparent from this that the muhabbat of that person whose muhabbat is an obstacle in attaining the muhabbat of Alláh Ta'álá, is forbidden – it is harám!

Think for a moment of the status that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had attained in his 'ibádat of Alláh Ta'álá and his obedience to Alláh Ta'álá. Is there any comparison? Even then Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is requesting for sohbate-sálihín – the company of the pious – through whose company he would be aided in his muhabbat for Alláh Ta'álá and thereby his muhabbat also be increased.

I ask again: Is there anybody who has greater love for Alláh Ta'álá than Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم? We have been given a lesson in this, O mu'mins! Namely that, if we are attracted to company, it should be the type of company requested by Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Otherwise, that company that is an obstacle in the love of Alláh Ta'álá, one that produces a dislike instead of an attraction, that company one should consider repulsive. This is the deeper inference of Rasúlulláh's صلى الله عليه وسلم statement.

One should address oneself as follows: "If this is what Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has said, then a person like myself should be even more cautious about such company which lessens my muhabbat for Alláh Ta'álá. How do I know what effect it will have on me? Enticed by enjoyment, it should not happen that my nafs slides down to the level of ammárah-bis-sú'!"

So, that person who steadily reproaches himself and continues steadily to walk along the path of ibádát and obedience (tá'át), reaches a stage where he develops such a disgust for sins as any decent person has for filth (najásat). He now also has such an attachment for shaghl, tahammul, riyádhat and 'ibádat that even if, occasionally and involitionally – on a ghair-ikhtiyárí basis – he misses out on some ibádát or tá'át he feels shattered with grief. Even then he reproaches himself.

Not to mention obedience in matters which are fardh and wájib, his

passion for nafl (for example, Tahajjud) is such, that even if his eyes did not open on a ghair-ikhtiyárí basis and he were to miss his Tahajjud, he feels grieved. And he now takes on compensatory measures to correct this ghair-ikhtiyárí omission.

The stage of nafse-mutma'innah

So, with ibádát and tá'át, the qualities of tahammul, sabr and riyádhat have so become part of his tabiyet and he has developed such repulsion for bad and evil and makrúhát (disapproved acts), that he has now entered the phase of nafse-mutma'innah.

These are then the signs whereby this phase of nafse-mutma'innah is recognised: he has developed such a forceful attraction and passion for ibádát and tá'át that the qualities of tahammul, sabr and riyádhat are part of his nature, part of his tabiyet and good character is part and parcel of him.

His passion knows no bounds and he ardently cherishes this desire that: "My tongue remains continuously fresh with the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá." 'Ibádat at its proper time is firmly established. Staying away from sin is now natural. Yet the ardent desire is: "My tongue should also be continuously busy taking the Name of Alláh Ta'álá, that my tongue should be continuously fresh with the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá! If I have occasion to say something, then too only words of goodness should issue from my lips and no bad or evil words should be uttered." Of course, bad or evil acts are even more remote.

Remaining silent is also 'ibádat and kaláme-khair is also zikrulláh

Words of goodness are what Alláh Ta'álá wants from us, for it has been narrated:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰ خِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْراً اَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

This means: O mu'mins! When you have brought ímán on Alláh Ta'álá and you have brought ímán on the Day of Qiyámat – on being resurrected and having to give account for your deeds – then, when you speak, say what is good, otherwise remain silent.

So, remaining silent is also ’ibádat. And speaking words of goodness (kaláme-khair) is also zikrulláh, because these words are spoken in obedience to Alláh Ta’álá’s orders and this mu’min is stopping himself from speaking what is bad and he is restraining himself from speaking evil.

The ímán within this mu’min demands that he has the faith and belief (’aqídah) of Alláh Ta’álá being Hádhir-Názir, so he tells himself: “The thought of Alláh Ta’álá must become firmly embedded in my heart, seated immovably, so that there should be no moment, no second, that the thought of Him should leave my heart.” Except at unavoidable times.

It may happen that, when involved in some necessary work, some diminution appears, but His thought is still there; and the moment he is free from the concentration of that necessary work, the same forceful remembrance (yád) is back.

The tongue is fresh with the zikr of Alláh Ta’álá and the heart is joyous in His remembrance (yád).

This nafs is the nafse-mutma’innah. And Záte-Bárí Ta’álá desires that this nafse-mutma’innah is one’s objective (matlúb).

Thus, the tálibe-Haqq, one with the correct concern, has steadily progressed, stage by stage. Swerving away from ammáriyet, he had arrived at lowwámiyet. Here his concern had increased. His self-reproach, his pondering and his introspection had not abated and in this way, he had traversed lowwámiyet until mutma’innah (tamániyet – tranquillity) entered his nafs. And this is the stage that is desired (matlúb) as far as Alláh Ta’álá is concerned.

With the fadhl and karam of Alláh Ta’álá and the barkat of your presence and the quest within you, Alláh Ta’álá is causing me to speak. Alláh Ta’álá is well aware of that person who is a tálibe-Haqq and of what calibre that tálib is. The murabbí-Haqíqí is He. This is the intermediary means.

Take note: Humbleness (niyázmandí) should be maintained, pride (náz) should not enter.

You should now know the features that allow one to identify nafse-ammárah, nafse-lowwámah and nafse-mutma’innah. You should also know that as far as Alláh Ta’álá is concerned, nafse-mutma’innah is the objective (matlúb), so that nafse-mutma’innah also becomes matlúb for

the mu'min.

What has Alláh Ta'álá kept in store for such a nafs?

Before coming to that, Alláh Ta'álá addresses the kuffár, warning them of a horrendous punishment awaiting them:

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهٗٓ أَحَدٌ ۙ وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهٗٓ أَحَدٌ ۝

None punishes as He will punish on that day! None binds as He then will bind. (S.89.25-6.)

Such a severe punishment will be meted out to them that there will be no respite from it. They will be bound so severely in such a way as no one else can bind.

Having mentioned this state of the kuffár, Alláh Ta'álá goes onto address the nafse-mutma'innah:

يٰٓأَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۝

O Soul that has attained tranquillity (S.89.27)

Just ponder: Cleansing steadily, cleansing steadily, the nafs has been purified and all nafsániyet has been removed and rúhániyet has appeared. This rúhániyet has been termed nafse-mutma'innah.

ارْجِعِيٓ إِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۝

Proceed towards your Rabb, in the manner that you are pleased with Him and He is pleased with you! (S.89.28.)

"So much so that there is not even an atom's disturbance of that tranquillity (tamániyet) existing in your heart. From your side you have shown a desire for Haqq, but the tarbiyet has been done by Me."

The term used here is "Rabb" – denoting "One Who fosters and cherishes." The term "Iláh" – denoting "the Deity/ One to be worshipped" – is not used. The connotations of the two words referring to Alláh Ta'álá are different.

Yes, you had expressed a desire for Haqq, then you had attained clarity of understanding (basírat), which had the effect of bringing about guidance (hidáyet), which, in turn, resulted in closeness and acceptance (qurb-wa-qabúl), that is, showering of blessings (ináyate-rahmat.) So, now you are

witnessing the manifestation of that rahmat: O rúhe-mutma'innah! Return to your Rabb happily!

There is also a lesson contained in this address: Even though you have reached this goal of nafse-mutma'innah, your gaze is not on yourself! If the object of your gaze is yourself – if you feel that you have personally, independently and exclusively reached this stage – then your gaze is still on the creation (i.e. yourself) and not on the Creator, not on Haqq!

Depending on the occasion, Záte-Bárí Ta'álá mentions that quality of His to us, which is appropriate at the time: O rúh which has attained itminán, return to your Rabb happily!

[Here Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *paused for a few moments and then continued.]*

Zikr and tranquillity

With the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá, my thoughts are racing. In which direction? As follows: The essence! The sum total of that rúh filled with itminán (as has been outlined to you), Alláh Ta'álá has summarised its quality in the Kaláme-Pák:

الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوْبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِاللّٰهِ ۭ

Those who believe and whose hearts have tranquillity in the remembrance of Alláh. (S.13.28.)

Haqq Ta'álá is virtually saying: "O mu'min! Are you desirous of tranquillity? Then let the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá become your food and drink!" This is speaking in lay terms, idiomatically. Make the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá your food and drink. Make it your garment. Wear it all the time. Eat and drink it all the time. Let it be your rúhání food. Let it be the clothes of your ímán – let it be taqwá.

ۙ وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوٰى ۙ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ

Clothes of taqwá – these are the best! (S.7.26.)

In actual fact, Záte-Bárí Ta'álá has stated that the whole Qur'áne-Pák is zikr:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْنَ ۝

We, even We reveal the Reminder (Zikr) and lo! We verily are its guardian (S.15.9.)

Look. The whole Qur'áne-Pák has been referred to as Zikr.

Zikr has different forms. In other words, all collective ibádát, all collective riyádhát, all collective aversion to sin, all form categories of zikr. Zikr with the tongue (zikre-lisání) is not sufficient by itself, until the effect of that zikr does not produce the state of drawing one to 'ibádat enthusiastically and a state of repelling one from sins with disgust. Otherwise, verbal zikr by itself cannot be relied on.

The Qur'áne-Pák has been described as a Zikr. Its words should be recited in the correct manner, vocalising the sounds of the words properly. Secondly, it should be recited with proper understanding of its meaning and, thirdly, it should be recited with the aim of acting on all the laws contained in the Qur'áne-Pák.

Haqq Ta'álá has addressed a specific group – those who are mu'min. Those who are mu'min, what should their state be? Their hearts attain tranquillity by the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá; their hearts are blessed with serenity!

Does not every individual desire serenity and tranquillity? Nobody desires upsets and disquietude. So, the correct means have to be utilised. Haqq Ta'álá has stated: "O mu'min! The correct means for attaining serenity of the heart is My zikr. I am saying and thereby addressing the mu'min.

فَاعْتَبِرُوْا يَآ أُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ – *So, learn a lesson, O you who have insight!*

The "Alá" denotes that a warning is being sounded: listen with open ears to what is coming next!

أَلَا بِذِكْرِاللهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ ۝

It is only with the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá that hearts will attain tranquillity and serenity. (S.13.28.)

"That is why I am now saying," so Haqq Ta'álá is conveying to us: "O rúh that has gained tranquillity (itminán), return to your Rabb happily, pleased and joyful!"

Return to your origin

"Irji'í" – Return. Go back to that place from whence you came. You had initially been sent from Jannat, so now you are being sent back there. Whereas that person whose rúh is not in this state, his destination will be elsewhere.

This mu'min is bewildered. "But why this munificence? My Rabb! You are saying: 'Return happily from whence you came'. But why?"

ارْجِعِيْٓ إِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۚ

You are pleased with your Rabb and He is pleased with you! Wait! That is not all. Wait for another great ne'mat (blessing):

فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبَادِيْ ۙ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ ۚ

There are some very special sáleh bondsmen of Mine, join them!

This is also a very special blessing, otherwise, why was it necessary to mention it specifically?

"Enter this mansion, this palace, set in surroundings of verdant orchards, the magnificence of which you have never seen with your eyes and of which could never even have crossed your mind! These have been created by Me. My orchard! My Jannat! In it are all those provisions that make up complete and perfect comfort and luxury, absolute peace, tranquillity and serenity. When you cannot even imagine such a place, where could you have ever seen such a place? Enter now into such a garden and orchard, which is Jannat!"

To whom is this munificence being shown? To the nafs with tranquillity, nafse-mutma'innah.

The previous nafs has ceased to exist. Its opposition has been rooted out. And if, perchance, some fault shows, then immediately there is a turning towards Alláh (rujú'-ilalláh) and penitence (inábate-ilalláh). This, in turn, produces tranquillity of the heart and progressive tranquillity of the rúh – both inábate-ilalláh and itmináne-rúh progressing hand-in-hand. Inábate-ilalláh (turning in penitence towards Alláh Ta'álá) is an act most liked by Him.

Son of Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام

Do you now understand and recognise what is tranquillity of the heart (tamániyete-qalb)? If perchance, incidentally, a contrary action has taken place, then immediately the heart turns towards Alláh Ta'álá. This person is remorseful. He feels terribly ashamed. Even if his eyes shed no tears, his heart is weeping.

There is no Shaitániyet in him, that he does not turn to Alláh Ta'álá. Shaitán did not turn in penitence towards Alláh Ta'álá. No! He is the son of Ádam عليه السلام. He is human. Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام as well, being human, also disobeyed Alláh Ta'álá – not deliberately, mind you, but in a state of forgetfulness. Impulsively, incidentally, not with deliberate forethought, he displayed disobedience to the order given to him. However, when the realisation of his action struck him, he immediately became remorseful. He felt ashamed. He started reproaching himself.

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَآ أَنفُسَنَا ۚ وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ۝

Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the lost. (S.7.23.)

Alláh Ta'álá loved every word of his! And Alláh Ta'álá loved him even more because of this. Haqq Ta'álá said: "I have elevated his status even more!"

Do you see what rujú'-ilalláh, inábate-ilalláh does?

Alláh Ta'álá is saying: "How good is not my bondsman, that he has not seen me, yet he is penitent and he is turning towards Me!"

وَإِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ۝

And strive to please thy Lord. (S.94.8.)

He is making "rugbat" towards Záte-Bárí Ta'álá: He is undertaking burdensome tasks, making an effort, with mujáhadah and riyádhat, to get nearer to Alláh Ta'álá.

The áyet before it is: فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانْصَبْ ۙ

So, when you have finished, still toil. (S.94.7.)

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is being addressed: "O Nabí! O Rasúl! When you have freed yourself from your day's work of calling people towards hidáyet

then, in the last part of the night, for your own self take on the task and make the effort of ’ibádat.”

Although Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is being addressed, this is directed to all the mu’min generally and specifically to the náibáne-Rasúl. When you have freed yourself from your teaching duties, studying and giving lessons, then for your own self too, take on the task and make the effort of ’ibádat, depending on the free time available to you. Just think how much trouble did Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم not take!

This address to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is actually an address directed to the Muslim ummat and specifically to the ahle-’ilm who can be said to be the náibáne-Rasúl: That, for your own self too, take on the task and make the effort of ’ibádat in the last part of the night, turn in penitence towards Alláh Ta’álá.

In conclusion: Nafse-mutma’innah – the goal

So, now you should have come to know the different types of nafs and the features by which they may be recognised and differentiated. You should also have come to know that the nafs which is one’s objective as far as Alláh Ta’álá is concerned, is nafse-mutma’innah. It is to gain this objective that one makes an effort, that one tries very hard, that (for some) explanations are necessary. It is to gain this objective that one has to make mujáhadah – mujáhadah against the nafs, to terminate its opposition and gain victory over it.

This has been placed before you through the fadhl of Záte-Bárí Ta’álá, the barkat of my sheikh and your talab. This is karame-Rabbání.

Du'á

May Alláh Ta’álá, through His fadhl and karam, bless us with the taufíq arzání, to make our nafs into nafse-mutma’innah. Ámín, Yá Rabbal álamín.

Khudá háfiz.

A LETTER FROM MAKTÚBÁTE-THALÁTHAH

[A booklet with the title of "Maktúbáte-Thaláthah" has included in it a letter Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *wrote to one of his khádims some 30 years ago on the same subject of the nafs. The translated letter is being reproduced as it very appropriately summarises the subject in a very unique way.]*

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْٓءِ

وَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ۝

يَآ أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۝

My mukhlis muhib min azíz mokarram bandah,
May Alláh Ta'álá's blessings be on you!

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهٗ

Dear friend! It must be quite apparent to you that for a sálik, for the devotee (sáhibe-irádat), it is absolutely necessary to come to know the states of the nafs and to be acquainted and also to recognise the identifying features, so that one may keep one's watchful eye on it and thereby have its supervision made easy.

It should not happen that one is negligent (Alláh Ta'álá forbid!) and one succumbs to and becomes dominated by the nafs.

My dear friend! The nafs is only one, but it has three states:

1. Nafse-ammárah;
2. Nafse-lowwámah; and
3. Nafse-mutma'innah.

The original, basic disposition of the nafs is that of ammárah. It then progresses to lowwámah and then to mutma'innah.

NAFSE-AMMÁRAH

The nafse-ammárah is called ammárah (wayward/ imperious) because it orders one to do bad and evil. These malicious and filthy habits are so ingrained that it is prepared to sell the ákhirat in exchange for some measly, insignificant worldly desire or passion.

Qualities and special features of nafse-ammárah

The nafse-ammárah makes itself evident in such features like: bukhl (stinginess), hirs (greed), hasad (jealousy), jahl (ignorance), kibr (arrogance), shahwat (lust), ghadab (rage), ghaflat (negligence /indifference), tamá' (avarice), kizb (lying), riyá (show/ insincerity), bugdh (hatred), kínah (malice), bid-khalqí (rudeness), ghíbat (back-biting), involvement in useless or absurd activities (lá-yání), istihzá' (mockery), harming others, either verbally or physically and having many and unending desires.

All of these are the qualities and special features of nafse-ammárah.

The effects of nafse-ammárah

On the basis of its innate disposition, the nafse-ammárah lives in such depths of darkness (zulmát) that it makes no attempt to even try to differentiate between good and evil!

My dear friend! This nafs becomes the agent for the seductions of Shaitán and becomes Shaitán's tool.

My mukhlis friend! Of your two enemies this is the greater enemy and it is necessary for you to be very much on your toes in regard to it and also to be húshyár.

Method of rectification of nafse-ammárah

1. Attain knowledge (ilm) of the Sharí'at.
2. Take stock of one's nafs (muhásabah) every second.
3. Continuously instill the fear of death, of the punishment in the grave and of the terror-striking conditions of Qiyámat into the nafs.
4. Endow oneself with humbleness, humility and lowliness and adopt meekness and have the awareness of Alláh Ta'álá (khudhú') within you.

5. By means of nawáfil and every type of good deed, by supplication and weeping, make it incumbent on oneself to attain the nearness of Alláh Ta'álá (taqarrúb-ilalláh), so that Alláh Ta'álá may take one out of the pit of darkness which the natural propensity of the nafse-ammárah wishes to keep one in.

Warning

My dear friend! Do not ever feel terrified or get dejected so that you stop making du'á; and also do not consider victory and success to be remote and thus become lazy and lose heart: These abolish the relationship the muríd has to build up.

To the contrary, whatever instructions (ta'lím) you have been given, carry them out swiftly and enthusiastically. And stay away from those activities which make one negligent (ghấfil) of one's real Maulá-Mehbúb, that is, Alláh Ta'álá. Leave aside any involvement in useless activities (láya'ní).

There you have it! These are all the tasks in front of you in the phase of nafse-ammárah, in order to be liberated from its clutches.

NAFSE-LOWWÁMAH

Nafse-lowwámah is called such for this reason that when the nafs involves the person in some bad or evil, the person then scolds and reproaches himself.

Qualities and special features of nafse-lowwámah

Malámat (self-reproach), hawá (desire) makr (craftiness/ deceit), 'ujub (conceit), riyá (show/ insincerity), zulm (cruelty/ oppression), ghíbat (back-biting), kizb (lying), ghaflat (negligence/ indifference), hubbe-jáh (love of fame, prestige), hubbe-shahwat (love of pleasures). It will be seen that some of these qualities are to be found in nafse-ammárah as well.

The difference between ammárah and lowwámah

Despite sharing many qualities, the difference between ammárah and lowwámah is that lowwámah accepts haqq (truth) to be Haqq and bátil (falsehood) to be bátil, fásid (corruption) to be fásid and qabíh (bad/evil)

to be qabíh and, compared to its previous state, accepts it to be so even more than before.

This is because, in this phase, Alláh Ta'álá causes some light, which is termed angelic light (malakútí-roshní), to enter the sálik's heart. With the strength of this light, the sálik undertakes mujáhadah (striving against the nafs), which will then release and save him from the vile and loathsome qualities (akhláqe-razílah-wa-zamímah) of the nafs and adorn and embellish himself with praiseworthy qualities (akhláqe-hamídah).

However, at this stage he has not gained that release yet. But the urge and desire to follow the Sharí'at have been created in him and thoughts of making mujáhadah towards this end have also arisen.

That is why, in this phase, some good deeds (a'mále-sálehah) do make their appearance. That is, namáz, rozah, zakát, sadqah, tiláwat, some tasbíhát and so forth. However, with these good deeds there is some contamination with loathsome qualities as well, such as riyá, 'ujub and seeking praise. There is a desire for praise and adulation from the creation for the good deeds he performs.

Now that he has reached this stage, by being watchful, he continually becomes aware of his evil actions and his faults, and this forms the basis for removing negligence.

Method of release

This is quite simple. To progress out of this phase only two tasks have to be undertaken:

1) Mujáhadah – striving against the nafs.
2) Kathrate-zikr – an abundance of zikr.

Method of progress

Progress depends on removing the remaining loathsome qualities. So, when in this phase the luminescence of his deeds (tajallí-af'álí) manifests itself, then 'ujub and riyá will come to an end. This is because the sálik will then not consider any action to be his own and Therefore, will not become vain or conceited on any action (amal) of his.

My dear friend! He will remain all the time in the gratitude (shukr) and

praise (hamd) of his Creator and Master. And he will be in constant fear and anxiety lest this ne'mat (blessing) be snatched away should there be some shortcoming in his shukr. Thus, there will be no 'ujub and no riyá.

However, at this stage the sálik is confronted with an abundance of wasáwis (whisperings from Shaitán) and khawátir (showering of dispersed thoughts). The treatment whereby these whisperings and thoughts can be repelled is simply to ignore them! Also, to make an abundance of audible zikr (zikre-jehr) and to continually plead for Alláh Ta'álá's protection from every such thing from among Shaitán and men that will cut one off from Alláh Ta'álá.

NAFSE-MUTMA'INNAH

When, by the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá, the phases of ammárah and lowwámah have been traversed, by a process of mujáhadah and riyádhat, by making an abundance of zikr and by giving preference to seclusion (khalwat) over mixing with others (jalwat), together with a careful watch over and a monitoring of the nafs, there is a continual turning towards Alláh Ta'álá (rujú'-ilalláh), then a special condition or state (kaifiyet) of serenity and tranquillity (sakínah-wa-tamániyet) becomes firmly established. This is then said to be a state of mutma'innah.

Qualities and special features of mutma'innah

The sálik develops the following: Júd (generosity); tawakkul (trust/ confidence in Alláh Ta'álá;) kháshiyet-wa-tazallul (fear of Alláh Ta'álá and humility); involvement in 'ibádat; ridhá-wa-shukr (to be happy with Alláh Ta'álá and to be grateful); uns-wa-shouq (tranquillity and passion); obedience to the Sharí'at. The attraction towards obedience (tá'at) becomes a natural disposition, repugnance to sins to become a feature of his nature; he develops permanent independence of ghairulláh (everything else except Alláh); his character becomes so moulded to that of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم that he is not at peace if he does not follow (ittibá') Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Fanáyete-kámilah (complete annihilation) and ihsáne-tám (the awareness all the time that Alláh Ta'álá is watching him) are ingrained in him.

Effects of the high stages of nafse-mutma'innah

This is a stage (maqám) of tamkín (gravity/ power) and of 'aynal-yaqín (seeing with conviction) and is a stage of ímáne-kámil (complete ímán). At the time of reaching this stage, in your bátin your muhabbat for Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم will take on a completely different and special hue, different from the muhabbat that you previously had.

Warning

My dear friend! Remember this and always keep it in mind: Having reached this stage do not ever lay claim to perfection. In other words, do not even for a moment think that you have escaped from the clutches of the nafs, because then you will consider yourself to be safe from the influence of your nafs and you will become negligent about its propensity to commit sin.

Whereas, my dear friend, one should never ever be relaxed where it concerns one enemy! For, no matter how much he proclaims that he is your friend, you would have read or heard the following Fársí couplet:

Even if your enemy speaks in a friendly manner
And he speaks about grain then, too, consider it to be a trap!

Essence of the special effects of nafse-mutma'innah

So, when you have been blessed with the stage of tamániyet in your nafs, then its special quality is this that obedience to the Kitáb and Sunnah gushes throughout your entire body, through every root of every hair, through every vein and artery and through every muscle and sinew!

Thus, the Sharí'at becomes for you, my dear friend, your very tabiyet (nature). The effect of this is that the special Grace and Mercy-filled Hand of Alláh Ta'álá will absorb you! This is that "Yuh-bib-kumulláh" that is promised in the Qur'án Sharíf.

This absorption (juzb) is different from that absorption that presents itself in the initial stages of Sulúk. The reason is that this juzb is based on complete obedience (kámil-ittibá').

You then become the perfect example of this áyet:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

If you love Alláh, follow me; Alláh will love you... (S.3.31.)

My dear friend! At this point, from the hidden voice will this call be sounded:

يَآ أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۝

O Soul that has attained tranquillity (S.89.27)

That is it! The effect now witnessed will be a state of forgetfulness (nisyán) and from that side will be the unseen (ghaibat) and here your heart will be everlastingly occupied in experiencing the Splendour of Haqq (musháhadah-jamále-Haqq), in such a manner that you will never tire of it and you will not be satiated with it!

Effects of nafse-mutma'innah

My dear mukhlis friend! Now, at this stage where you have attained complete ímán (kamala-ímán) with conviction of seeing ('aynal-yaqín), this will be the situation that the eyes of people will find delight in making your ziyárat and listeners will lend an ear to what is been spoken. This is because, when he reaches this stage, the sálik personifies that person mentioned in the Hadíthe-Qudsí, where Alláh Ta'álá says:

> *I become this bandah's eyes with which he sees, I become his tongue with which he speaks, I become his hands with which he holds, I become his feet with which he walks and I become his heart with which he reflects!*

My dear friend! When he has attained this stage, the tongue becomes the interpreter of the Reality (haqá'iq) of affairs and of the secrets of the Sharí'at, all of which Alláh Ta'álá instills into his heart and for which he is indebted neither to the study of any kitáb, nor to listening to the words of anybody.

But, my dear friend, a Voice from Haqq Ta'álá reaches into his bátin:

اَنَا سِرُّكَ اَيُّهَاأَلْحَبِيْبُ وَاَنْتَ سِرِّيْ فَقِرْ عَيْنًا وَطِبْ نَفْسًا

I am your concealed One, O My beloved! And you are My concealed one. So, cool your eyes and be happy.

My dear friend! These are the special features of nafse-mutma'innah and its qualities and its effects.

May Alláh Ta'álá, with His fadhl, bless my dear mukhlis friend and muhibbe-sádiq with this.
Ahqar Muhammad Masíhulláh, afí-anhu.
5 Muharram 1385 A.H.

ESSENCE OF THE RÚH OF SULÚK

[Another short letter from the same kitáb is reproduced hereunder.]

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ اَلْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهٗ

A mujáhid is one who makes jihád (strives) against his nafs.

Talab (desire/ quest) is the objective. Wusúl (attainment) is not an objective. This is confirmed by the Ahle-Taríq (scholars of Tasawwuf).

And when the above is accepted, then one should not nurture in one's heart the demand and insistence on achieving what is not one's objective, because this is also a barrier. The reason is that by nurturing such a demand one is all the time in anxiety and disquietude in anticipation of what is not an objective. This anxiety and disquietude causes severance of jam'iyet and tafwídh (peace of mind and a state of entrusting), whereas both jam'iyet and tafwídh are pre-conditions for attainment (wusúl).

My dear friend! Embed this and ground it in firmly within yourself!

Mujáhadah is an objective and is of two types:

a) Mujáhadah-haqíqiyah: To be involved in good deeds and to be steadfast in their performance; and to stay away from sin.

b) Mujáhadah-hikmiyah: To refrain from those mubáhát that lead one towards sin.

The reality of mujáhadah is this that one should refrain from sin completely by resisting and opposing the nafs and this resisting and opposing the nafs is wájib and fardh. Also, one should oppose the nafs to a lesser extent in what is mubáh and here resisting and opposing the nafs

is mustahab. However, opposing the nafs in this latter situation is such that attaining that stage of opposition which is wájib is dependent on this opposition which is mustahab.

*Examples of mujáhadah-mustahabah:*To eat less; to sleep less; to associate less with others; to speak less; not to wear very fine clothes.

May Alláh Ta'álá grant my mukhlis, muhib and sádiq friend the wealth of wusúl and ridhá and nisbat. Ámín.

Ahqar Muhammad Masíhulláh, afí-anhú. 7 Muharram 1385 A.H. Yakshambah (Sunday)

BOOKLET NUMBER EIGHT

Rabi-ul-awwal 1416 – August 1995

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our Sheikh رحمة الله عليه, this eighth booklet is now ready.

Our Dín has five categories, namely:

1. 'Aqá'id – Beliefs;
2. 'Ibádát – Worship;
3. Mu'ámulát – Dealings;
4. Akhláq – Quality of one's character; and
5. Mu'ásharat – Social etiquettes and lifestyle.

In the kitábs "Hayaatul-Muslimeen" and "Aadaabul-Mu-aasharat" Hadhrat Ashraf 'Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه has adequately shown the importance of all these five categories in the life of every Muslim.

The sheikh has as his duty, in his capacity as a guide to that person seeking closeness to Alláh Ta'álá, the task of correcting the seeker in all these categories. Should the sheikh not correct the muríd, the sheikh is abusing the trust and responsibility placed on him.

Alhamdulilláh, Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه took special care to guide his muríds in all aspects of the Dín. The affection and special concern shown by Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه can be seen in all his works and all his majális.

In this majlis, although the emphasis is on mu'ásharat, a wide variety of topics are discussed and explained in such a manner as to make us understand quite easily the points being driven home.

May Alláh Ta'álá grant us all the taufíq to practise on the teachings contained in these majális.

Dr.I.M.

[This is a translation of a majlis-e-khás held by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib,رحمة الله عليه, in Jalálábád, India, on the 30th of August 1989, corresponding to the 27th of Muharram 1410.]

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Ithár – to take on taklíf to bring ráhat to others

What is ithár? It is to take on oneself such taklíf (trouble/ inconvenience), which is not beyond one's tolerance, in consideration of bringing ráhat (ease and comfort) to others.

This is the ta'lím in Islám. Yet, despite being Muslim, we Muslims have not understood Islám. What an amazing phenomenon!

Putting it differently: Despite being members of a household, we have not understood our home! Being members of a household, we have not recognised our home! Islám is a house, a basic fort, belonging to the Muslims. Yet we have not recognised this.

Yes – We are Muslims. Well... Yes... Admittedly, we are Muslims...

Like wealth: A person possesses a mere 100 rúpís. Yes, admittedly, it may be said that he possesses wealth. But, is he really wealthy, especially in present times? I have heard with my own ears people saying, in spite of having one lákh rúpís (100 000 rúpís). "I consider myself to be poor!" So, what is a mere 100 rúpís in comparison?

It was different in the past. We have passed through such an era and seen an age where people used to say of anyone in possession of a 100 rúpís, in a tone of awe: "That is a very rich person!" If somebody were to pick a quarrel with this person, others would quickly draw him to one side and reprimand him in subdued tones: "Are you picking a quarrel with him? Don't you know that he is a very rich man? He has a 100 rúpís!" Today, if anybody has one lákh rúpís, it is considered insignificant.

Similarly, with Muslims: Yes... Well... It may be said that they are Muslims. Even though most aspects of Islámic teachings are not to be found in them and more un-Islámic features are found, even so, one concedes that they are Muslims. What type of Muslims...? Anyhow, they are still Muslims.

Kindly note the tone of my voice in my making these remarks. Do you understand what I am trying to convey?

Another example: If a person owns five or 10 acres of land, technically he will be said to be owning land – he has land, whereas the next person may have nothing. But can he be called a landowner in the real sense of the word? Of course not! If he were to boast to be a landowner, he would merely be making a laughing stock of himself.

Similarly, Muslims are themselves making a laughing stock of Islám. It is not others who are making a laughing stock of the Muslims. The Muslims themselves are making Islám an object of mockery.

Should we tread firmly and completely along the path of Islám, with an even temperament (mustaqil-mízáj), then nobody will have any occasion to mock or sneer. We are the one's inviting others to mock and sneer.

Do not incline towards those who have made zulm

Be that as it may, we consider ourselves to be Muslims. Well and good. This is also of use. We will be forgiven on that basis. However, it is to be seen whether this forgiveness comes after being censured, or after being slapped, or after being given a whacking. Or – Alláh forbid! – being punished by the fire of Jahannam touching us, even though the full force of the fire does not envelop us. As is stated in the Qur'án Sharíf, where the mu'mins are being addressed:

وَلَا تَرْكَنُوْٓا إِلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۙ

And do not incline towards those who do wrong, for then the fire will touch you. (S.11.113.)

There are huffáz sitting here to bear me out as to the correctness of this áyet. Among you sitting here are also scholars, teachers and students – molvísáhibán, mudarrisín and tulebá.

"(O Muslims!) Do not incline towards those who have committed zulm (injustice/ oppression)" – committed zulm to themselves by adopting shierk and kufr. Do not adopt their ways! Do not imitate them in matters of mu'ámulát (transactions) and mu'ásharat (social etiquettes and lifestyle).

As far as ’ibádat is concerned, Muslims do not imitate them: When a Muslim makes namáz does he not make sajdah to Alláh? Obviously, a Muslim does not makes rukú or sajdah, neither to idols, nor to pictures placed in front of him, nor to hand-fashioned statuettes, and so forth.

“So, O Muslims! Make sure that you neither incline towards nor adopt the habits, the mu’ámulát and mu’ásharat of the mushrikín and kuffár. Be aware! It should not happen that the fire of Jahannam touches you, caresses you!” The touch of that fire is very severe!

A touch of the fire

You may have noticed how, occasionally, cigarette smokers take a puff on their cigarettes, not realising that there is only a stub left and burn their fingers. Immediately they wince: “Uf! Uf!” and drop the cigarette because of the pain they experience. This is the reaction to pain from the lighted end of a mere cigarette!

And what is the intensity of the fire of Jahannam? If one were to take the most intensely cold ice in this world, so many degrees below freezing and use this ice to cool down the fire of Jahannam 70 times, then the resultant heat will equal the heat of the fire we have in this world! And what is the intensity of the fire in this world? Just a very slight contact is enough to cause severe burns.

It is in connection with this fire that Alláh Ta’álá states: “O Muslims! Be alert! Be húshyár! Live with a sense of modesty, a sense of honour! Do not become objects of mockery! Do not make of yourselves playthings!”

Just see how much affection Alláh Ta’álá is showing. See how Alláh Ta’álá is trying to explain to the mu’min, trying to make him understand. If, even after all this, the mu’min refuses to accept, then the responsibility is entirely his!

Alláh Ta’álá tried to make Shaitán understand, but he had refused to understand. It was his pride that caused him to become arrogant. He started arguing, putting his own proofs in front of Alláh Ta’álá. He had the audacity to attempt to prove that Alláh Ta’álá’s hukum (command) was contrary to wisdom! What was the final outcome? Even after being made to understand, he still refused to understand – we all know what became of Shaitán!

So, O insán! O Muslim! Záte-Bárí Ta'álá is trying time and again to make you understand, point out to you: "See here. You are Muslim. Do you understand? You have laid claim to Islám. In your heart you have accepted and have held the firm conviction of My existence and the existence of various matters pertaining to the unseen, which I have made known to you – such as the existence of Jannat, the Day of Qiyámat, of hisáb-kitáb (reckoning), of resurrection after death, and so forth. The requirement of this conviction is, surely, that you should obey whatever command I give to you. Believing in Me entails these obligations that whatever I tell you to do, you should do: Whichever place I forbid you to sit, do not sit there. Whichever place I tell you to sit, sit there. Whatever work I forbid you to do, do not do it. Whatever work I tell you to do, do it." This is what is meant by the word "Believing" (mán-ná).

And, if the above is not the case, then we will term it "knowing" (ján-ná), but definitely not "Believing!"

The difference between mán-ná and ján-ná

The two are different. Ján-ná (knowing) is one thing, whereas mán-ná (believing) is something else.

For example: You will find non-Muslims stating: "We do not reject the fact that Islám is a true religion." However, this belief is held in such a way that Islám is not given precedence over other religions. This is, therefore, knowing (ján-ná), but it is definitely not believing (mán-ná)! So, of what use is that?

It is a different issue completely that we use the term "Alláh" and others use the term "Bhagwán" (god). However, they associate other things with that term. They behave towards the creation in a manner that should be entirely reserved for Alláh Ta'álá. They believe that others have a right to intercede for them and that, by their intercession, their work will be done. In this way, Alláh Ta'álá has been made a joint partner, having no choice, but to accept the intercession of the others, irrespective of whether the plea is worthy of being accepted or not. Whereas all that Alláh Ta'álá does, He does through complete freedom and choice (not under compulsion from others). So, these people are associating other things in the attributes

(sifát) of Alláh Ta'álá.

How can this be termed "Believing" (mán-ná)? It is merely "knowing" (ján-ná). That is why Alláh Ta'álá time and again states:

يَآَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اتَّقُوااللهَ–يَآَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اتَّقُوااللهَ– يَآَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اتَّقُوااللهَ

"O you who believe in Me! Fear me!" "O you who believe in Me! Fear me!" "O you who believe in Me! Fear me!"

"Do not commit such acts which are contrary to belief in Me! Do not follow the ways of other nations. Your affairs and dealings should not be like theirs. Your habits should not be like theirs. Your apparel, your speech and conversation, your sitting and standing, your moving about and travelling, your gazing and looking, your home-life, your appearance, your styles and modes, should not be like theirs. You are Muslim!"

What we are discussing is mushábahat – imitating others.

The example of uniforms

What can one do? But, at times, in order to make you understand, one has to make use of an English word. The word is "uniform". All of you know what it means: It is the special style, mode or dress belonging to a specific group.

For example: The police force forms one specific government department. The armed force also forms a specific department in the government. Now, are their respective outfits the same? The answer is no.

Take the different ranks within each group: Are the outfits exactly the same for everybody, or are there differences to distinguish one rank from another? Obviously, there are differences. The same will apply to the other forces – the navy, the air force, and so forth.

Take the rank of captain in each force. The uniform and insignia of the captain will differ from other ranks in the same force, as well as from the same rank in the other forces. The captain in each force will thereby be identified as a captain belonging to his specific force.

If the captain in the police force were to wear the uniform and insignia of a captain in the defence force, he will be guilty of having committed an

offence. If, in his defence, he were to state: "I have not adopted the uniform of another country. The uniform I am wearing is, after all, that of the same government," will he be let off? Of course not! He will still be found guilty of having committed an offence.

These examples are being used to make the little one's understand. May Alláh Ta'álá make it that we can understand! The issue is quite clear and simple.

If a captain in the police force were to don the uniform of a captain in the army and he were to present himself to one of his superiors, the Inspector-General for example, the conversation would go something like this:

I-G: And who are you?

Capt.: Sir! I am one of the captains serving under you.

(The whole country's police force is under the Inspector-General.)

I-G: But the uniform you are wearing is that of an army captain. What is the meaning of this impudence?

(Understandably, he is not only upset, but offended as well.)

I-G: How do you expect me to recognise you? By your uniform I would have taken you to be a captain in the defence force. Yet you state that you are one of my captains in the police force!

The captain will be duly charged and suspended from duties. A hearing will take place as to why he wore the uniform of a captain in the army. If it is found that he had sufficient justification, he would be reinstated. If insufficient justification is found, he will be dismissed from his office.

Do you get the point? Just for slightly changing his clothes, charges have been laid. For a while, even if this period is very short, he has been said to be an offender and has been suspended from duties. Is this not an ignominy, a disgrace, a slur on his character? His subsequent dismissal is another matter.

So, for this short while, is it not a situation of "Fatamas-sukumun-nár" – the fire (of Jahannam) touching him? By committing an offence and being an offender, is he not facing the possibility of dismissal? This is why these matters have to be explained.

Now do you understand, children?

Bach-cho – ba-cho! Children – save yourselves! Guard yourselves from

adopting the dealings and lifestyles – the mu'ámulát and mu'ásharat – of the non-Muslims: their clothing and dressing, their form and appearance, their ways of eating and drinking, and so forth.

This is what Alláh Ta'álá is saying by stating:

وَلَا تَرْكَنُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا۟ فَتَمَسَّكُمُ ٱلنَّارُ

And do not incline towards those who do wrong, for then the fire will touch you. (S.11.113.)

Those who have made zulm on themselves by not bringing ímán on Alláh Ta'álá, do not make your appearance, your features, like theirs. It should not happen that the punishment that is going to befall them, befalls you!

"Accepted that, on the basis of ímán and believing in Us, We forgive you. However, for a few days, by virtue of the fact that you imitated their ways and modes – and thereby became offenders – We will suspend your entrance into Jannat. Not dismissed permanently. No. Dismissal is for the non-Muslims, the kuffár. But it could happen that you are suspended for a few days when you come in Our Presence and permission to enter that home from which you had originally come, is not granted as yet."

In our worldly situation, if any noble and respectable person is suspended even for one day, how much shame will he not suffer because of his honour being besmirched! And just think: one day in the hereafter is equivalent to a thousand years in this world! This is stated in the Qur'án Sharíf.

This is nothing to be amazed about. You must be aware that even here on earth there are certain countries where the sun does not set for six months – that one day will last six months. So, why be amazed that one day in the hereafter can equal a thousand years here?

If an offender is given one days punishment in the hereafter, it will be equivalent to one thousand years here. However, this offender has not been banished to Jahannam forever. He is not being deprived of Jannat forever. His entrance to Jannat has been suspended for some time. For this reason that the ímán with which you have been sent, you have incorporated in it the appearance of another, a non-Muslim. His religion of shierk and kufr you have not adopted, but you have surely adopted his modes, his styles,

his appearance – the features of mutineers and rebels.

Signs of true muhabbat

Are these not acts bringing displeasure? What type of muhabbat do you profess?

Look at it this way: You have a friend who professes to have muhabbat for you. You also have an enemy. Now, your friend, who professes to have affection for you, deliberately wears the clothes that your enemy wears. Will you be pleased? Will you tolerate it? No, you will not be pleased and you will not tolerate your friend's action. So, how do you expect Alláh Ta'álá to be pleased? "That person, that Muslim, who believes in Me, has adopted the dress of others!" Will there not be cause for Him to show displeasure? Definitely He will be displeased.

This person's religion has not changed. However, in his heart, which should have expressed Islámic values at the practical level, that amount of change has occurred! Therefore, displeasure!

Coming back to your friend: He says: "Brother, I have muhabbat for you." Your response is: "That I do not deny. But, is this the quality of your muhabbat that you have donned the clothes of my enemy? Just how much displeasure are you not causing me? Just stop to think for a while!"

In the same way Alláh Ta'álá is saying: "O Muslim! I have specified for you an Islámic uniform that, when you leave your home, you be recognised as a Muslim! From top to bottom, you should be identified as a Muslim! The dread and fear that should have been in you for Me, you have replaced with fear of My enemies? So much so, that you have changed your dressing and appearance? Is this how much you fear them? Whereas My khauf (fear) should have been greater than everything else!"

[Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *paused for a while before continuing.]*

Civility and courteousness in the Sharí'ah

"Yes... Yes... Yes... That much concession I have allowed." How much? "When somebody comes to you – for example, a non-Muslim ruler or high-ranking official – then you may adopt those worldly customary civilities and courtesies appropriate to the occasion." You will say politely: "Come

in. Come in. Make yourself comfortable." You will instruct your servant: "We have an honourable guest. Bring something cold for him to drink." Or: "It is quite cold. Bring him a hot cup of tea," And so forth.

This is worldly courtesy and politeness. This humbleness is not termed "shar'í", but is termed "customary". Inner heartfelt humbleness, shar'í humbleness, is something else. The above humility is customary and permission has been granted for it.

If, instead of a high-ranking official, an ordinary clerk were to come to you, then your hospitality and civility will be tailored to his level. It is apparent that one will take into account the status of the individual when being courteous.

"I have granted permission for this. But I have not granted permission for you to change your dressing, form and appearance. My Habíb Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has passed on the message to you:

اَنْزِلِ النَّاسَ عَلٰى مَرَاتِبِهِمْ

Show hospitality to people according to their status.

"That much permission I have granted. But I have not said that, out of consideration for them, you should copy their dressing, make your facial features and appearance like theirs."

Do you understand?

To be courteous is actually a manifestation of Islámic good character. In it is also the principle of dafa'-e-zarar – warding off harm. Therefore, in order to ward off harm and to display Islámic good conduct and the dignity of Islám, be courteous towards them.

"This much I have not forbidden you. But why have you changed your appearance? Why are you dressing like them? Why do you eat in the manner they do? They are in the habit of standing and urinating. You have also started doing this! They have adopted the habit of roaming from one food-laden table to another, strolling and eating, standing and eating. You too have started aping them and have started eating in this fashion. What answer do you have? An excellent course of studies you have undertaken!"

So, you have not been barred completely from Jannat. Jannat, from whence

you originally came, you will still attain. But, not as yet! No, not as yet!

Examples of ithár

We were saying: In Islám, an elevated level of good character in a person is the following: To take upon oneself such a burden which one is capable of bearing, with that thought in mind of bringing ease and comfort to the next person. Islám tells us to adopt selflessness (ithár).

An example: One person sitting here has a cold. However, the room is hot and stuffy and the room is full. On the one hand, putting on the fans will relieve the stuffiness, but, on the other hand, this person may start sneezing and his nose may start running. His attitude should be: "I will tolerate the discomfort. Put on the fans for the benefit of the others."

This is what Islám teaches. One should tolerate that taklíf that is within one's capacity, out of consideration for others. What a lofty and noble teaching! This is such a lofty ta'lím that, O Muslim, there is absolutely no question of you deliberately causing harm and difficulty to others!

We are not speaking of that situation where the other person thinks, without any basis, that he has been caused taklíf by you. When this conclusion is merely imaginary, then you are not culpable. From your side, you should have taken the necessary care and vigilance (ihtimám) to see that no taklíf comes to the next person.

Ihtimám – observing necessary care and vigilance

The word to note here is "*ihtimám*," meaning *"Effort/ arrangement/ administration/ care/ vigilance".* The root word, when analysed further, denotes "removing grief and difficulty".

From "*ihtimám*" is derived the word "*muhtamim*" (administrator/ manager/ principal). One does not know who from among you will become a muhtamim. Nevertheless, you are, at least, muhtamim's in your homes. Ihtimám, therefore, denotes that the muhtamim-sáhib should take on taklíf on himself in order to bring ease and comfort (ráhat) to others.

So, O Muslim! Take the necessary care and vigilance, that "neither from my speech, nor from my actions, will others be harmed or placed into difficulties." There is absolutely no question of causing taklíf to others

deliberately. On the contrary, one has to take the necessary care and vigilance, with the correct concern (fikr) that whenever one has to speak to anybody, one should think: "It should not happen that my statements should hurt the feelings of others."

Think and ponder before you speak. This is what Islám teaches. Before speaking, think as follows: "I wish to say something. The words, the phrases, the sentences that I am about to use – if the next person were to address me using those very words, would I be grieved or not? Would I feel hurt or not?" This is the crucial point one has to identify. If one concludes that those very words, if directed at you, would hurt you, then why should you direct them at others?

This is the ta'lím of Islám. This is a basic principle and rule. By living according to this rule, by observing this principle, both in one's home and outside, will there be peace (aman) or will there be anarchy (bid-amaní)? It is obvious that there will be peace.

Ahlulláh – members of the household of Alláh

For this reason, take all the ahlulláh – those who are really ahlulláh – meaning those of the household of Alláh... But, before going on, let us pause for a moment:

Ahl: This means "members of a family".

Ahliyah: This word is derived from the word above and means "The one in the house," that is, the wife.

Ahle-beit: This word signifies "The members of the household."

Ahlulláh: These are "those of the household of Alláh Ta'álá".

It is accepted that if the head of the household holds a high status, his children will be treated respectfully as well. For example: The son of the Collector-Sáhib comes to visit somebody who does not know him. That person who knows who the visitor is, will whisper into the ear of the host in subdued tones: "The Collector-Sáhib's son is here! He has come to visit you!" The host is made aware of the status of the visitor beforehand, to make sure that the host does not inadvertently say or do anything which may offend the visitor, and the son then takes the complaint to his father, the Collector-Sáhib, whose annoyance would be catastrophic. The host will,

therefore, be very cautious, because the visitor is ahle-Collector-Sáhib.

The same applies to those who are the ahl of Alláh, the ahlulláh. That is, if one comes to know that the person is an ahlulláh. And how would one come to know who is an ahlulláh? From the following: Whatever orders or commands Alláh Ta'álá has issued, he carries them out and whatever deeds Alláh Ta'álá has forbidden, he abstains from them, whether they are related to akhláq (character), or to mu'ámulát (transactions), or to ibádát (worship) or to mu'ásharat (social lifestyle). This person will be of the ahlulláh. These are the features by which the ahlulláh are recognised. This is the "uniform" by which they are identified. Do not expect the word "ahlulláh" to be written in big letters on their foreheads!

To expand further: The ahlulláh carry out those orders which Alláh Ta'álá has commanded to be carried out. They are not satisfied at merely carrying out orders which pertain to what is fardh and wájib only, but also carry out those injunctions which fall in the categories of sunnah, of mustahab and also of 'azímat, as much as opportunity and health allows.

That person who performs what is fardh and wájib, but leaves out what is sunnah, how can he be an ahlulláh? If this person loves Alláh Ta'álá and this muhabbat is the motivating force behind his obedience to the orders of Alláh Ta'álá, then what type of muhabbat does this person have for Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم that he is not obedient to him also?

The ankles should not be covered

Whenever you see him, his lungí or the legs of his pants are covering his ankles. What type of ahlulláh is this that, though he is wearing the correct uniform, the detail and design are incorrect? What type of uniform is this? The ankles should not be covered. The lungí or the legs of the pants should end above the ankles.

To cover the ankles, to allow the legs of the pants to hang below the ankles is harám! The namáz is not qabúl – not accepted!

You now know the mas'alah. The importance of attaining 'ilm cannot be overemphasised. All types of topics are discussed in a majlis. Just as one's practical akhláqí life is tailored and refined, so too 'ilmí-qánuní-masá'il (laws of the Sharí'at) are brought to your attention at the same

time, because, basically, one has to act according to these laws and masá'il of the Sharí'at.

You will be questioned: "Fair enough – you wore a kurtah and pants. But why were your ankles covered? What answer do you have? Is this the way an ahlulláh behaves? And, even while performing namáz, your ankles remained covered! If your namáz is not qabúl, how can the namáz of the musallís be qabúl?" Such a person is not of the ahlulláh. No, he is not of the household of Alláh Ta'álá!

A person belonging to a household is one who tries to follow the ways of that person who is the acknowledged elder. By bringing on the elders displeasure, by discarding his ways, how can he be called a member of the ahle-beit? So, too, with the ahlulláh.

Do you understand?

Eating with the left hand is not permissible

Take the question of eating: Yes, you ate your food using your right hand and you drank liquids using your right hand. Eating and drinking with the left hand are not permissible – it is ná-já'iz. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has said that eating and drinking with the left hand is the work of Shaitán.

Eating and drinking are acts of 'ibádat and fall in the category of one's mu'ásharatí lifestyle, that one should eat and drink using one's right hand. Even this aspect of one's living has been taught to us by Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم.

However, you must have witnessed the following situation: A person is sitting and drinking tea using his right hand, which is correct. He now takes a biscuit using his left hand and, while he drinks his tea using the right hand, he eats the biscuit using his left hand. This Muslim is acting contrary to the laws of Islám.

Not reciting "Bismilláh" when eating

Not to say "Bismilláh" and to eat and drink is the work of the kuffár and mushrikín. You will just sit down and eat without reciting "Bismilláh"? No. Recite "Bismilláh" when eating. By not reciting "Bismilláh", Shaitán becomes a partner in one's meals.

The following has appeared in the Hadíth Sharíf:

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was sitting down to a meal. Some other sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم were also with him. One other sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه arrived. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم invited him to eat as well. This sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه sat down in some haste and started eating without reciting "Bismilláh". Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم kept silent. While he was eating, the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه suddenly remembered that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had said that whenever one forgets to recite "Bismilláh" in the beginning, one should recite "Bismilláh" as soon as one remembers, by reciting:

بِسْمِ اللهِ اَوَّلَهٗ وَاٰخِرَهٗ

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ اَوَّلَهٗ وَاٰخِرَهٗ

In the name of Alláh, at the start and at the end.

The sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه quickly recited "Bismilláh". On hearing this Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم laughed audibly.

Laughing audibly and uninhibitedly is forbidden

Only on two or, at most, three occasions has it been recorded that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم laughed audibly. Mostly, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم merely smiled. To laugh raucously – loudly and uninhibitedly – is forbidden. This type of laughter causes deadening of the heart.

كَثْرَةُ الضِّحْكِ تُمِيْتُ الْقَلْبِ

Laughing in abundance (raucously) causes deadening of the heart.

The sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم were puzzled by Rasúlulláh's صلى الله عليه وسلم laughing. "O Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, there was no apparent reason for you to laugh at this moment. What caused you to laugh?" Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم replied: "This person came, sat down and started eating. He did not recite "Bismilláh", so Shaitán joined him in eating the food. When he remembered, he immediately recited "Bismilláh". The moment he did this, Shaitán vomited what he had eaten!"

Do you see the difference between reciting "Bismilláh" when commencing to eat and not reciting "Bismilláh"?

Others could not see, but Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم saw Shaitán eating with the sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه and subsequently vomiting. In order to understand this, take the following situation.

Some people find it difficult to understand certain concepts, so it becomes necessary to illustrate these concepts. This becomes difficult at times, and fatigues the mind.

To continue with the illustration: If a person is possessed by a jinn, others, even though they may be standing next to this person, are unable to see the jinn. However, the person possessed by the jinn is able to see the jinn.

Similarly, there were certain occurrences which Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم witnessed, but not anybody else. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم then informed the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم: and whatever Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم conveyed to the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم is Haqq.

So, for the Muslim, on every occasion, the ta'lím of Islám is a means of elevation to a special level of dignity and nobility (shán). By discarding these teachings and opting for the manners and ways of others one is discarding this special dignity and nobility. Discarding this shán, this lofty status, is an insult which, in turn, is bringing disgrace on oneself by one's own hands. We ourselves have given others an opportunity to laugh and mock at us by us deliberately discarding our lofty status. Why point fingers at others?

Eating is also part of the Islámic mu'ásharatí lifestyle. It is also one of the distinguishing aspects of Islám – it is an Islámic uniform! Your manner of eating is different and the manner of eating of others is different. So, one's "uniform" is not only one's apparel and features, but one's manner of eating also forms part of one's "uniform".

Do you understand, little one's? Bach-cho... ba-cho! Save yourselves from adopting the lifestyles and manners – the "uniform" – of others.

Certain utensils should also be different

Take a utensil like the lotá (spouted jug), which is made of copper. Non-Muslims also possess these lotás and they also make use of them. The lotás of non-Muslims have no tin-plating, whereas your (Muslim's) lotá should be plated with tin. Islám teaches that there should be a difference even in

the appearance of copper utensils which are in common use by Muslims and non-Muslims and which have the same name, such as the lotá. This does not apply to utensils made of other materials.

Why?

Be assured that this is not a case of “ta’assub”. Ta’assub means that one stubbornly refuses to accept the Haqq. This is different: This is to remain steadfast on Haqq – to set aside the use of those items which will bring about a difference in Haqq. If, by adopting the methods and practices of others – the non-Muslims – a change occurs in our true and proper practices, then Islám says that these practices should be discarded. Otherwise, by being connected to their practices, and so forth, it should not happen that items of their shierk also infiltrate into you!

If today you have adopted an indifferent attitude to the lotá, then tomorrow you will not bother about your mode of dressing. And, when you have become careless about your dressing and started adopting their modes, then the next day you will not bother about your features. And, when you go about in this fashion, going around unconcerned about your facial features, then do not be surprised that your heart, which was initially pure of shierk, is also now contaminated with items of shierk! Do you understand this gradual, step-by-step process of erosion?

Give a finger and Shaitán will grab the whole hand

So, why have you, in the first place, presented your finger to Shaitán to grasp? Why have you given your enemy the opportunity to grab hold of your finger? Merely presenting your finger to Shaitán has certain implications. Shaitán bubbles with joy: “Aha! Aha! His tabiyet (temperament) is inclining towards me!” Shaitán gently caresses the finger. “My work is done! My task is accomplished!” And he goes forth. Before you know what is happening, he has taken full control. This is so, especially in this age, where such situations are openly in evidence.

Take this practical example: A person approaches you. He may be a Muslim. He may be an acquaintance. He may be somebody closer, an actual friend. Looking very despondent, he pleads: “My very dear brother! I’ve got myself into a jam! I got into debt and I had to sell my house. You do

have an empty spare room. Please be kind enough to let me have the use of that room."

You take pity on him and you let him have the room. Time passes. You enquire. "You said that you will be searching for other accommodation. What is happening?" "Yes, I am searching, but I haven't found anything yet," he replies. Four months pass by, then six. Soon, a year has elapsed. Now you order him to vacate, but he stubbornly refuses. He will not leave. Not only that, but he is one step ahead: He has been to the authorities and filed some false papers claiming ownership of the whole house! A court case is now pending. However, before the case comes up, he approaches you and makes an offer: "Let us compromise: You give me twenty thousand rúpís and I will withdraw my claim."

Have such incidents not occurred? They have. They have been brought to my notice. You may have heard of them also.

[Several people in the majliskhánah affirmed this to be so.]

So, you can see what type of Muslim he turned out to be! You can see the quality of his Islám. You took pity on him. You tried to be magnanimous to him in his hour of need. You provided him with a room – you extended a finger to him to hold on to, but he turned out to be Shaitán's brother! He tried to grab the whole house! Why did you extend your finger to the enemy to grasp? How did you allow yourself to be duped into thinking that he was a loyal friend? Why did you fall for his sweet talk? There was poison mixed with his sweetness! There was enmity hidden under the cloak of his friendship!

Similarly, by extending a finger for Shaitán to grasp, slowly, steadily, he has now taken full control!

When you left home to go to the bazár or to some neighbourhood and there was a female – or a young lad – present, very pretty and charming, why did you lift your gaze to look at her? If your glance did fall on her inadvertently, why did you not lower your gaze immediately?

Had you not fixed your gaze on her, your heart would not have become infatuated; and then you would not have pined for her; and then you would not have lost your honour; and then you would not have squandered all your wealth; and then you would not have suffered disgrace in the eyes

of people! All these misfortunes are nothing, but a result of your looking at her!

Do you understand the above example and the sequence of events?

Alláh Ta'álá had already stated long before that you should not look at a ghair-mahram. The cause of these misfortunes coming to you is your looking at her, that you then laid down your whole life and future at her feet. Just why did you extend your finger? Just why did you lift your gaze and look at her? Why did you not realise, beforehand, the folly of lifting your gaze to stare at her? Just why did you allow Shaitán to get to you?

"But," one hears it said very often: "Alláh-Mia has given us eyes to look with. What is the harm in looking?" Enmeshed in Shaitán's web! The harm, dear brother, is that you will destroy your entire life!

Being in the wrong company

Take gambling: You see people sitting and gambling on the pavements. A youngster goes there to stand and watch. He is just watching, mind you. He is not gambling. His father passes by, sees him standing there, gives him a hard slap and pulls him away.

Was the youngster gambling? No, he was merely standing and watching. Yet, he was given a hard slap by his father. The reason is that today he is standing and watching and tomorrow he will be sitting with them and the next day he will be gambling like them! So, stop him before the rot sets in!

Should the police arrive on the scene, they will pounce on all those present at the scene, those sitting as well as those standing. All will be considered to be guilty of being accomplices in the act.

Do you understand these examples?

Not extending one's finger to Shaitán is not an act of ta'assub (opposing the Haqq). On the contrary, it is a situation of safeguarding one's heart from being affected by the smoke of shierk, to save it from matters of kufr.

Therefore, the lotá in your house should be such that it is not an imitation of the lotá in their house. Today it is the lotá. Tomorrow it will be your dressing; and the day after it will be your features and appearance; and then it will be your heart, which will slowly, slowly, slowly incline towards

them. "What harm is there?" What harm? This is the harm just outlined!

Alláh Ta'álá has given you direction:

وَلَا تَرْكَنُوْٓا إِلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۙ

"Just see that you do not incline towards any such items of theirs..."

Note that the operative word used here means "to incline/ to bend towards". The word "amal" (to act), has not been used. Do not let your temperament incline in that direction. It has not been stated that you should not act that way because, once there is an inclination, then action will surely follow! So, do not incline. This inclination is the preamble to being involved in activities like theirs.

Remember: As mu'mins, you will not remain in Jahannam forever. On the other hand, it will not happen that you will be allowed to enter Jannat straightaway! Your entry will be suspended. Because of your bad actions you will be prevented, for a time, from entering Jannat which is your original home from which you had been sent. Because of your opposition at the practical level, to Alláh Ta'álá's commands, at this same level there has been placed an obstacle to your entrance into Jannat for a while. For such, there will be punishment for a few days.

Do you understand?

People in the house know what is poisonous and what is not

To continue: We were speaking of the ahlulláh – the members of the household of Alláh Ta'álá. They know, in the house of Alláh Ta'álá, what is for eating and what is not for eating. Being members of the household, they are aware of this. What is not for eating, they will abstain from.

Take this example: A mouse in the house drove a certain person crazy. At times, the mouse would nibble at the rotí; at times, it would gnaw the clothes; at times, his wallet was dragged away; and so forth. The mouse drove him frantic. This person then went to buy some strychnine (a rodent poison used in the old days) from the market and he mixed it with some rotí to poison the mouse. This he then placed in the house for the mouse to eat. So, there is now strychnine in the house as well. Will the members

of the household now eat the strychnine? Of course not. The members of the household will eat what is meant to be eaten and what is not meant to be eaten, they will leave alone!

So, too, with the ahlulláh, the members of the household of Alláh Ta'álá. They will "eat" what is meant to be eaten – that is, they will act on what has been commanded; and what is not meant to be "eaten" they will abstain from – that is, they will refrain from those actions and deeds which are forbidden. They are the ahlulláh!

Their hallmark is: مُدَاوَمَةُ عَلَى الطَّاعَةِ – Always, continuously and assiduously acting according to the orders of Alláh Ta'álá. That is, carrying out what has been ordered and abstaining from what has been forbidden, both with regard to external deeds (záhirí a'mál) as well as internal deeds (bátiní a'mál).

External and internal harmful items

Take alcohol. It is harám to drink alcohol. This is of the záhirí a'mál. Now take a bátiní (inner) quality: Takabbur (Arrogance). This is not a physical substance to eat or drink. Yet, takabbur is something that the nafs feeds on! Just as alcohol is harám, so too is takabbur harám. Just as alcohol is to be avoided, so too is takabbur to be avoided. The former intoxicates the body; the latter intoxicates the nafs. If a person has left off alcohol, but he has not left off takabbur, he is not of the ahlulláh!

Another example: A person performs namáz, but he does so to obtain self-satisfaction. Upon somebody speaking harshly to him his anger flares up and he is ready to start a fight. This person is not of the ahlulláh! These examples are placed before you with the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá.

These are not real ahlulláh. Yes, there is no doubt that they are mu'min. As for being ahlulláh...? Yes... Well... A teeny-weeny bit, a teeny-weeny bit. But real and proper ahlulláh? Not at all. However, conceded, a teeny-weeny bit.

Another example: A father tells his son not to eat a certain food, because it will cause stomach cramps. He will not die, but he will suffer from stomach-ache. The child does not listen and eats what has been forbidden to him. As a result the child becomes ill, even though he does not die.

Similarly, with ímán: involvement in prohibited acts causes a definite weakness to come into one's ímán, even though one's ímán does not slip away. So, why did you take on such things that bring about feebleness in your ímán? It is a mere lotá, but what type of lotá is it? It is merely "food,", but what type of member of the household is he that "eats" what is forbidden to him?

A person with ímán is an Alláh-wálá because of his ímán. But the question is: What type of Alláh-wálá is he? The answer: He is still green and immature! The real Alláh-wálá is firm in all his actions: All those items that have to be discarded, external and internal, he discards. Just as he has left off alcohol, so he has left off takabbur as well! As for deeds to be performed, he carries out what is fardh and wájib and, in addition, he is punctual with his sunnats as well, because these are also the "household items" for the ahlulláh. Not like one who performs what is fardh and wájib and omits what is sunnat!

Furthermore, this mu'min Muslim, having the necessary health, without placing himself into hardship, ensuring that there is no interference in his necessary obligations, where there is ease, carries out what is mustahab as well. He does not leave out what is nafl.

This person is at an elevated level of being a mu'min, of being díndár. He is of the high grade of the ahlulláh.

Passing with first, second and third grades

Take the example of matriculants: Among the ones who pass are those who pass with first-class passes, those who pass with second-class passes and those who pass with third-class passes. When it comes to entrance into university, those with first-class passes will have no difficulties. But those with third-class passes? They will surely struggle to get in, despite having passed.

Similarly, a person may be a mu'min – he has ímán – but he falls in the category of the third-class passes. He has passed. However, on that Day it will be clear whether he has difficulty getting into Jannat or not. Just like the matriculant with a third-class pass has to struggle to get into university, so this mu'min also will have to struggle to get into Jannat. Some are

granted entrance instantly. These are the first-class passes. Others are told to wait: "There are problems with your credentials!"

These present-day examples are being used to make the little one's understand.

Let us take the example a little bit further: Possibly, somebody may make a representation on your behalf. It does happen. Somebody puts in a good word, clearing the way for the student to gain entrance to the university, even though he has only a third-class pass. So, too, those in the third-class are told to wait, while others are allowed entrance into Jannat instantly.

Now, a surprising thing happens: some of those who have gained entrance immediately, are stopped! Oh! Oh! What is this? Alláh Ta'álá will say. "You are not such as to enter alone. Take others as well – you are being granted permission to intercede for others! For whomsoever you intercede they will gain entrance into Jannat with you!" The 'ulemá, those who are of the household of Alláh Ta'álá, the elite, are addressed by Alláh Ta'álá, delightedly, with great muhabbat, as they intercede for others: "Má-shá-Alláh! Má-shá-Alláh! Accepted! Accepted!

Yes, those very 'ulemá, those ahlulláh, about whom you used to say some very horrible things, today they are of use to you! Even some of those from among the third-class passes are gaining immediate entrance!

In the Hadíth Sharíf it has been stated:

اَلنَّظَافَةُ وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ مِنْ دَرَجَاتِ الْاِيْمَانِ

Cleanliness and good character are among the stages of ímán.

Nazáfat: Cleanliness/ purity – Full and complete purity, záhirí (external) as well as bátiní (internal).

Husne-khulq: Good character, as defined by the Sharí'at and not as understood by custom.

What is husne-khulq – good character?

Customary good character is the following: When a visitor arrives, to be courteous to him: "Please do come in. Do sit down and make yourself comfortable. Here, have a cup of tea." This is showing a good character

according to social custom. It is not shar'í, internal good character.

Shar'í good character has to do with internal qualities connected to the heart. Shar'í bad character, on the other hand, denotes bad qualities emanating from the nafs. So, husne-khulq means a good character that manifests good qualities which emanate from the heart and which does not manifest bad qualities emanating from the nafs.

The quality of hilm

One quality found in a good character is, for example, hilm, also called burdabárí (forbearance). To illustrate this quality:

Somebody has made a very nasty remark, so much so that it has struck one deeply in the heart. The heart is grieved. It finds the remark most burdensome. But one shows no reaction. It is as if having heard and not having heard are the same. Consequently, one does not say anything. This is called hilm in Arabic and burdabárí in Fársí, meaning "to lift/ bear a burden". The burden placed on the heart is being lifted or borne. Somebody has hurled abuse at one. One's heart has found it burdensome, but one's reaction is that of indifference.

This is just one quality found in the heart of a person with husne-khulq. Among the qualities that Alláh Ta'álá has, one is that of Him being Halím – One who has hilm. So, this earthly Muslim has taken on this quality of hilm and is also halím. Why has he taken on this quality of Alláh Ta'álá's? Because he is of the ahlulláh!

The quality zulm

Let us take zulm. Zulm is: to wrongfully usurp somebody else's rights; to wrongfully seize somebody else's rights and to place a burden on his heart; to taunt and chastise others; to take away somebody's goods and wealth and thereby chastise him.

This zulm is contrary to the concept of the nazáfat (purity) of Záte-Bárí Ta'álá. Zulm is a defective quality and Záte-Bárí Ta'álá is free of defects. Záte-Bárí Ta'álá is nazíf (pure):

اِنَّ اللهَ نَظِيْفٌ وَيُحِبُّ النَّظَافَةَ

Alláh is Pure and He loves purity.

Part and parcel of nazáfat is the quality of hilm. Záte-Bárí Ta'álá is Halím. He is Sáhibe-hilm (perfect in the quality of hilm). So, the mu'min should also take on this quality of hilm and become sáhibe-hilm.

On the other side we have zulm. Záte-Bárí Ta'álá is clean and pure of zulm. The mu'min, likewise, should become clean and pure of zulm. And if the mu'min is not clean and pure of zulm, what then? Well... Then, fine... He may be a mu'min, but still very green (kach-chá)! He may be an ahlulláh, but still very green!

Do you understand my way of speaking?

Fruit that is still green, unripe, is very bitter, very sour. Ripe fruit is sweet and delicious. The ahlulláh who are "ripe" are "sweet and delicious". They have neither sourness nor bitterness, nor are they half-and-half, half sweet and half bitter. They do not do things that are "sweet" and then do things which are "bitter". Yes, very occasionally, incidentally, they may be involved in doing something which is wrong. This does not negate them being of the ahlulláh. But to be involved in activities that are contrary to the concept of an ahlulláh every now and then, time and again and to be speaking such things which are contrary to the concept of an ahlulláh, how can he be said to be of the ahlulláh? Yes... Well... He is a Muslim.

Those of you who are studying obviously wish to pass with a first-class pass and not a third-class pass. Similarly, in one's ímán and one's Dín also, the desire should be to be in the group of "first-class passes".

A true desire (tamanná) is associated with resolve (irádah); and resolve goes together with correct effort. If the correct effort is not there, it shows that the resolve is incorrect. This person is thus deceiving himself and others!

There are individuals here from England and from South Africa. So, these discourses are lessons being given. Slowly, steadily, with examples and illustrations, with careful explanations, an effort is being made for the lessons to settle firmly in your hearts, so that an understanding may dawn within you.

This methodology is essential for an ustád or a lecturer to adopt.

Whatever is written in the kitábs has to be explained and expanded on by using simple examples and illustrations, so that it becomes easy for the students to understand. This is a manifestation of the affection the ustád has for his students. This is his favour on them. He is taking on a burden on himself in order to bring benefit to others, to bring ease and comfort to their hearts.

"To bring ease and comfort" can be in several forms: One is to bring ease and comfort physically. Another is to bring ease and comfort and cheer to the heart.

To continue: Just as it is necessary to leave off záhirí prohibitions so, too, it is necessary to leave off bátiní prohibitions. This person performs his namáz, but he has not eliminated the sickness of the eyes! What is this? The following: The moment something pretty and beautiful, something gorgeous passes by in front of him, his eyes latch onto it. Imagine! He is actually busy looking at it! Whereas it is impermissible that one should gaze at what is prohibited.

Why is he looking at these distractions? The answer is simple: There is still some deficiency in him. There are still some shortcomings in his being a kámil ahlulláh, a kámil Alláh-wálá. He is still green – kachápin! This is the yardstick he should judge himself on. Whenever such an event occurs, he should immediately reproach himself: "Oh! Oh! I have fallen into error. I should not have done that! I had thought that I had reached perfection, but it appears that there is still some deficiency in my ímán. There is still no perfection in my Dín. I have still not reached top grade. I am still kachápin!"

What would first grade be?

First grade would be where he would have immediately dropped his gaze the moment his eyes fell on the distraction.

Second grade is where he notices the distraction and his temperament is tempted to gaze at it and he lifts his eyes to look, but he then quickly drops his gaze again.

Third grade is where he follows his inclination unchecked and his eyes latch onto the distraction and he keeps on looking all the time, still unchecked.

Remorse and taubah

Here is another situation: His eyes fall on the distraction. His temperament urges him to keep on looking, which he does. Suddenly he realises his error. "What am I doing?" He is ashamed. His heart feels contrite. He is remorseful. He is grieved at his lapse. "I've done wrong! Yá Alláh! What have I done?" he cries inside himself. "Astagfirulláh! Astagfirulláh! I have done wrong! I have done wrong!"

This taubah – this grief, this remorse at having done wrong – is a compensation for his lapse. He had dropped to grade three, but this taubah has raised him to the first grade! He has been given an opportunity. This opportunity is not granted to everybody: it is granted only where the person shows the necessary aptitude and has had a temporary lapse. Does this situation not arise when students have to write examinations?

This leeway is given because of his showing remorse. Instead of being in the third grade he has been re-established in the first grade. He has regained the position of entering Jannat at the first instance. This is because of his taubah which has removed the obstacles in his way. Entrance has been made easy. Had he not made taubah, had he not been remorseful, he would have remained in the third grade with no possibility of being given an opportunity to gain the first grade.

Do you understand these examples?

It is accepted that disobedience to Alláh Ta'álá and going against His commands, is a great evil. However, a greater evil than this is to refuse to make taubah! Why so? Because there is a very real danger that this person's ímán will slip away! There is security of one's ímán in being ashamed of one's wrongdoings, in being remorseful. The result will be that, stage by stage, each time trying to save oneself, trying to avoid the wrong, one will reach that point where one stops oneself completely from that wrongdoing. Now one is no longer involved in that wrongdoing.

Going back: We had started off by saying that in order to bring záhirí and bátiní comfort and ease to others, to bring happiness to others, to bring cheer to others, a person takes on himself such tasks and burdens, such difficulties, which are not beyond his tolerance. He says. "It does not matter that I am inconvenienced, as long as he has some ease. I will

tolerate the inconvenience."

For example: There is only one rotí in the house. There is absolutely nothing else to eat. I am also hungry and a hungry beggar also appears at that same moment. One is aware that this person is genuine and that he is not a beggar by profession. He asks: "I am hungry. For the sake of Alláh Ta'álá, may I please have a piece of roti?"

How many rotís are there? Only one. If I eat the rotí, my hunger will be relieved. If he eats it, his hunger will be relieved. However, my hunger is not such that, if I do not eat that rotí, I will die. I know from past experience that I can manage to stay hungry till the next meal. I have kept fasts. I have kept fasts on long, hot days even. Even on those occasions when I did not manage to eat sehrí I still fasted the whole day. No harm came to me. I did not collapse from weakness. I can manage to miss out on one rotí. So, the rotí goes to the beggar! "Here, you take it."

Saving one's own life takes priority

Yes, if the hunger is beyond one's capacity to bear and one may die from hunger, then the situation is different: "If I do not eat that rotí and I will die, then saving my own life takes priority."

اِنَّ لِنَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا

Verily your nafs has a right over you.

You have rights on your life first. To save your own life is fardh. So, you will not give away that rotí. Why should you give him the rotí and you die of hunger? Yes, come another time and, if I have, I will give.

Take another situation: You and somebody else are in such a predicament that both of you are in the extremes of thirst. Without water both of you will not survive. You have in your possession just a little water, sufficient for only one person to take a gulp and survive. If you give him this water, he will survive and you will die. If you drink the water, you will survive and he will die. In this situation, drink the water yourself: it is fardh for you to save your own life.

Do you now understand the mas'alah concerning selflessness? Selflessness

means: to give priority to the comfort of others over one's own comfort. Another word one may use is "qurbání" (sacrifice). In other words, to place oneself in taklíf in order to bring comfort to others, is to make qurbání.

'Adl (justice) and fadhl (bounty/ mercy)

This is Islám! Weighed in the balance! With 'adl (justice) is fadhl (bounty/ mercy). If you have acted with 'adl (justice) then, má-shá-Alláh, that is being kámil (accomplished). You are dealing justly with everybody. But remember, there are occasions for fadhl as well.

Never, at any time, make du'á to Alláh Ta'álá that He should treat you with adl, for then you are asking to be destroyed! On the contrary, always make du'á for fadhl and karam (mercy and generosity). And this being so, that you should always be making du'á for Alláh Ta'álá's fadhl and karam, then you should also bring these qualities of Alláh Ta'álá into yourself.

Take your wife. She should be treated with fadhl and karam. Do not treat her with mere adl. Should she be treated with zulm? Perish the thought! Of course, there is absolutely no question of treating her with zulm! The least – the very bare minimum – is that she be treated with adl. This is the absolute barest minimum. Actually, she should be treated, as stated, with fadhl and karam. Why?

The creation and nature of woman

The reason is that we are facing a special difficulty here. Alláh Ta'álá has combined us with somebody who is naturally very tèrhí (bent.) From her initial creation, Alláh Ta'álá has placed in her this quality of being very tèrhí.

When Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام was created in Jannat, he was all by himself. However, human nature is such that it yearns for company. Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام thought: "How nice would it not be if there was somebody else with me too!" Jannat is a place where a mere thought becomes a wish fulfilled! In the wink of an eye, from a rib on his left side, a female appeared. Alláh Ta'álá had fulfilled his wish.

She was created from the left side, from the contrary side, as opposed to the right side. This is the first cause of her being tèrhí. Secondly, she was

created from a rib. Now, is a rib straight or bent (tèrhí)? We all know that a rib is bent. What is the quality of this kink in the rib?

Let me explain: Take a piece of iron that is also bent. No matter how bent it is, it can be straightened by softening it in fire and then beating it straight. Try the same method in attempting to straighten the rib, you will not succeed! Fine. Use another method. Take castor oil. It has a lubricating and macerating effect. Leave the rib in castor oil, even for countless years, to soften it and then beat it straight. You will still not succeed. The rib will not straighten out. Instead, it will break. So, we know that a rib is so tèrhí – so tèrhí, that no matter what we do, it is just not possible to straighten it out!

So, the male has been attached to a partner with these qualities! Therefore, do not be surprised if her speech and her statements are completely tèrhí as well – irrational, illogical, vexing and insolent! Who are we speaking about? Specifically, the wife! Not women in general.

As for women in general? They will ensnare any unsuspecting male! Just see how they posh themselves up when they leave their homes. Be warned! Very tèrhí they are by nature, created from a rib that is bent. Yes, be warned! If you are not careful and you do not pass by quickly with lowered gaze, you may well land up as the next victim!

Yet, see how foolish they are, too. When they are at home, they are very unmindful of their dressing. But the moment they have to go out somewhere... Ohoho! Like some heavenly húr she emerges! By applying some make-up, a touch of red here and a touch of white there, and by wearing glittering and fancy clothes, she has imagined herself to be a heavenly húr when, in actual fact, she is anything but one! Just remove all that red and white colouring and you will see her actual self.

Dunyá in the guise of a woman presenting to Hadhrat Ísá عليه السلام

This is an exemplification of dunyá: Hadhrat Ísá عليه السلام was once going somewhere. Looking behind him, he saw a woman walking along, dressed attractively, gorgeously and glitteringly. He decided to investigate. As he drew nearer, he saw that she was actually an old hag, with a most hideous face!

Hadhrat Ísá عليه السلام said: "You rascal (trying to deceive people)! Do you really imagine that people will be enamoured of you?" She replied: "Oho! The whole world is enraptured by me!" Hadhrat Ísá عليه السلام said: "Then, have you been faithful to your admirers?" She replied scornfully: "Me? Show loyalty? I have killed all my past admirers!" Hadhrat Ísá عليه السلام said: "Who are you, then?" She replied: "I am dunyá!" Dunyá had been disclosed to Hadhrat Ísá عليه السلام in the form of this old hag.

We were speaking about wives. By nature they are tèrhí. Also, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has said: See, do not hound your wife in an effort to straighten her. She will not straighten. Instead she will break. That is, you will end up wanting to give her taláq (divorcing her).

This is one difficulty that I referred to, namely that she is tèrhí. There is another as well.

Intelligence ('aql) and cleverness (húshyárí)

The other difficulty concerns her 'aql (intelligence). There is a deficiency in the 'aql of women. Should they do anything intelligent, it is an exception, an incidental occurrence. By nature, the intelligence of women is deficient. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has stated:

هُنَّ نَاقِصَاتٌ فِي الْعَقْلِ وَالدِّيْنِ

They are deficient in intelligence and in Dín.

Mind you, women are húshyár (clever), but they are not intelligent. Their cleverness is so astute as to snatch away the intelligence of the most intelligent people! Should I add something more..? Yes? You want me to? Then listen! Oho! There is a saying in Urdú:

چالاک کوّا گو کہا وے

The crafty crow eats faeces.

The crow is a very crafty bird, very clever. If a crow is sitting on a fence and you bend down, it immediately flies away – it has anticipated your picking up a stone to hurl at it! See just how clever it is! However, despite this cleverness it eats faeces!

We can deduce, therefore, an inverse relationship between intelligence

and cleverness: the greater the cunning, scheming and craftiness, the less the intelligence. And vice versa: the greater the intelligence, the less craftiness there is, or there is a complete absence of craftiness.

Women, therefore, being nuqsáne-'aql (deficient in intelligence), will be proportionately very húshyár. In the same way, if any male has this quality of craftiness, he too will have a deficiency in his intellect.

So, Alláh Ta'álá has attached to this male a female who has been created with such a nature. This female being his wife. Therefore, in your home, if your wife makes such tèrhí, tèrhí statements, such absurd statements that place a burden on your temperament, what cause is there for you to show anger? Why be amazed? You knew from beforehand! So, why did you get married? You already knew beforehand what type of disposition a woman has. You wished to be attached to her, make a home with her, knowing that by nature she was going to make such statements. Therefore, it is expected that you would have come prepared – prepared with the qualities of hilm, of burdabárí (forbearance), able to bear the burden of her statements. She being such, Therefore, there is no cause for feeling grieved, no cause for having taklíf, no cause for being amazed. The question then follows: What cause is there for anger? Therefore, no anger (ghussah)!

Do you understand?

This is the manner in which the quality of hilm and burdabárí of Alláh Ta'álá should come into this insán mu'min. The ahlulláh show this shán. The real ahlulláh, the members of the household of Alláh Ta'álá, show this nobility and dignity – that whatever statements are uttered by the wife, they tolerate them. Make no mistake: the wife will utter such things that are beyond one's imagination!

Advice on getting married

Are you married? No? All the more reason for you to listen very attentively! It is a good thing that these matters are being discussed. In-shá-Alláh, you will make a good home.

Firstly, look carefully before you get married. Find out about the family and the girls background. Find out about her manners and character. Do not look just at the eyes, whether she has big, beautiful eyes or not! How

will you know whether her heart is big or small?

I am pointing this out because youngsters look merely at the face: What are her eyes like? What is her complexion like? But completely unconcerned about what her inside is like! Habits will remain forever, but youthful colour and complexion will not remain forever. Just see what happens after she has borne a few children, or after an illness lasting some months – that youthful face quickly fades away. As for habits? They remain forever.

I am pointing out these matters to the youngsters because this is an age full of fitnah. In Europe, England, Africa and other countries, the boy and girl insist on seeing each other first. This is not so here. The special shán of this province, [U.P. India], is that the parents arrange the marriage. But this is changing even here: People from outside are coming to stay here. Also, girls are now being given an "education". The result is that they have become more tèrhí! By receiving western "education" girls have become more bent! Now they are even more tèrhí!

Take kárelá. It is a very bitter vegetable. You now cross it with ním, another bitter plant. The result will be that now you will have kárelá that are even more bitter!

So too, the female. She is "bitter" by nature and now that she is "educated," this "crossing" has made her more "bitter"! To cope with her now is even more difficult!

"I insist on going on a holiday," she is adamant. "You and I are incompatible, molvísáhib. Why are you keeping me here in a prison?" Mind you, she now calls purdah a prison!

Come to think of it, is it not better to confine some people to a prison or to an asylum, rather than letting them out? Women are best kept in the house, rather than let out, or else they will get wings and fly away! Once they set their feet outside, you will not get them back!

The European style is for the boy and girl to see one another before getting married. "I want to see first!" is what is insisted on. "Idiot! What are you going to see? Oh, very well, very well, if you insist." Arrangements are made to go and have a cup of tea. The girl is handed the tray to serve the guests so that the boy has an opportunity to see her. For a few fleeting seconds his eyes fall on her before she disappears again. What has he seen

in those few seconds? He has had no time to note the colour of her eyes or the shape of her nose or her complexion. Yes, he has some vague perception that she appears to be pretty. What an achievement!

So, on the third day of the marriage, he has given her taláq! If he had made nikáh to her, satisfied at seeing her, why the taláq? The reason is that he had merely seen her countenance and not her habits. After marriage, he is now face to face with her habits. Appearance (súrat) is a passing thing; behaviour and character (sírat) are for always.

These comments are made incidentally. We were discussing the wife. If she makes tèrhí statements, if she speaks insolently, if she says things contrary to one's temperament, there is no cause for surprise. And, if there is no cause for amazement, then there is no cause for grief. And, if there is no cause for grief, then there is no cause for ghussah! Then, in-shá-Alláh, there will be life-long compatibility, because you will remind yourself all the time: "Alláh Ta'álá has created her such for our isláh, from the rib of the left side, tèrhí!"

Therefore, the real ahlulláh show a tremendous degree of hilm and burdabárí towards such wives. The question of taláq does not arise.

Qissah concerning Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه

Have you heard of a person by the name of Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه? Was he some nonentity, somebody insignificant? NO! He was somebody imposing, with a personality that was intimidating! So much so, that it comes in the Hadíth Sharíf that Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم said: "O 'Umar! Whenever you are passing by, Shaitán runs away from you!"

Bearing this in mind, listen carefully now, so that this qissah can come in use at the appropriate time, without you having to search around for solutions.

Amírul-Mu'minín Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه used to patrol the city of Madínah some nights, in order to keep himself informed of the conditions of his fellow Muslims, both as far as their Díní needs were concerned, as well as their dunyáwí (worldly) needs.

One day his wife enquired: "Just where do you go to in the evenings?" Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه replied calmly: "You are aware that,

from Alláh Ta'álá's side, I have been made Amírul-Mu'minín. I have the responsibility of looking after the safety and protection of the community, to its Díní and dunyáwí needs and necessities." His wife retorted: "All lies! What you have just said is a pack of lies!"

Ask yourself: Is this not enough to enrage anybody? But this was not just anybody. Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه was one of those noble souls who were given the glad tidings in this world of being granted Jannat! Is it even remotely possible for such a person to tell lies? Yet, here is his wife openly accusing him of telling lies!

Still very calm, Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه asked: "In what way am I lying?" His wife spoke accusingly: "In this way,: Yes, no doubt, you are going on your inspection tours, but you are deliberately going to those neighbourhoods where reside pretty young lasses, to feast your eyes on them!"

Again, is this not a further, a second occasion for anger? What did the Alláh-wálá, Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه reply to this? He said: "This is only a figment of your imagination. Alláh knows very well."

Who spoke so mildly? Hadhrat 'Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه a person whose whip everyone feared! Yet, towards his wife he showed tremendous forbearance (burdabárí.) Her harsh statements, firstly calling him a liar and then slandering him, he bore gracefully, brushing them off by saying that it was a figment of her imagination and that Alláh Ta'álá knew very well.

Are you listening? Do you understand what it means to be an ahlulláh? Do you understand what it means to be a kámil díndár Muslim? O you sálikín! O you tálibáne-isláh! O you who have left your homes with a desire and a quest for isláh! Understand well what isláh is, how you should mould yourself, how you should live, how you should bring a change from your previous lifestyle to another mode, by continuously placing burdens on your tabiyet – this being the purpose of your journey here! O you tálibáne-isláh! O you tálibáne-tazkíyah! You should change the state of your nafs: Haul it over from the left to the right!

An ahlulláh is one who has annihilated his or her nafs

Understand very well what an ahlulláh is. Do not harbour the misconception

that having performed your namáz and that's it, you are now a complete ahlulláh! Making namáz is no exceptional feat – like we partake of meals, so we offer namáz. What is so great about that? The real task, the heavier task, is to control your nafs 24 hours of the day, inside and outside the house and, on top of it, in your relationship with your wife – that is an achievement! May Alláh Ta'álá protect us!

So, to what degree must the nafs not be killed! Complete annihilation of the nafs! The nafs has to be brought under complete control! This is a greater task!

It requires a great deal of wisdom to look after and nurture one's wife. It requires tremendous foresightedness, tact and insight. One has to choose the appropriate time to correct her, explaining to her with very carefully chosen words, using loving terms, in a pleasant and nice manner, in affectionate tones. From time to time read to her the kitábs of our buzurgs, so that a change may come into her. This is the method.

Do not react with ghussah upon ghussah. If you do, what then is the difference between the female and you, the male? You should have utilised a well thought-out strategy to bring about a change in her. And changes do take place! If it is possible that your isláh can be made, cannot her isláh be made as well? Definitely so!

You have heard of Rábi'ah-al-Basriyah رضی الله تعالی عنها? She was a woman. She became a murídní of Hasan-al-Basrí رحمة الله عليه and took guidance from him. Just see what elevated stages she reached! Yes, it is possible for her, a female, to reach the levels of the great ahlulláh, even though, once in a while, once in a year, or once every two years, she may show some tèrhí behaviour.

The illustration of circus animals

You may have attended a circus performance, where different animals – tigers, elephants, wolves, deer and goats – are put through their different acts. In my young days, when I was still at school in Aligarh, I once attended such a circus performance. After each animal has performed individually, in the grand finale, all the animals are gathered together. Tables and stools are placed in the middle, food is laid out separately for each animal and

then each animal goes and sits on its stool and eats the food laid out for it. The amazing thing about this whole scene is that the tiger does not bother about the wolf next to it; the wolf does not bother about the goat next to it; and so forth. Each animal is busy with its own allocated task.

Just see how insán, by utilising a process of continuous teaching and training, has brought about such changes in these animals as to get them to behave contrary to their natural, instinctive animal temperaments!

So, why not that insán who is female? Once the talab (desire/ quest) comes into her, by a process of teaching and training, why can she not change? Why should the tèrhí-ness not change? Why can she also not attain the heights of the ahlulláh? Why can her habits not change? Of course, provided that there is somebody prepared to take on this task! This person himself must first be prepared to take on a burden.

And if a female can change and can turn from evil towards good, turn from sin to piety, is there any conceivable reason why such a change cannot come into a male? This will happen, provided that, firstly, that the talab is present and, secondly, the person does not act on his own opinions and initiatives (apná zehen nah chaláwe).

Look: the circus tiger and wolf did not act on their own opinions and initiatives, but submitted passively to the instructions of the trainer. Similarly, the muríd should not act on his own opinions and initiatives, but should subjugate these to those of the sheikh.

Ponder again: if a female's isláh can be made, why should a male's isláh not be made? How can this be? If it is so and no isláh is taking place, then it shows that there is no talab! His niyet (intention) in coming to lie around here is corrupt! When a tálibe-sádiq has come here and he observes the huqúqulláh and the huqúqul-ibád, there is no question of not reforming! When animals like the tiger and the wolf can be made to understand and can be reformed, then why not this male insán?

We were saying, concerning the wife: Explain very nicely to her. Not immediately she does something tèrhí, but at some other appropriate time, at night, judging her mood. Read some kitábs to her. Do this from time to time, but do not wage a campaign against her. Then you will see, in-shá-Alláh, the rib that was bent becoming somewhat straightened as far as her

habits are concerned.

From the qissah of Hadhrat ’Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه do you understand what it means to be an ahlulláh, what it takes to be díndáre-kámil? This is not achieved merely by making namáz and then going to sleep. Despite his wife’s most tèrhí remarks, despite her most harsh words, he remained unflustered. He was burdabár!

That qissah concerned a sahábí, Hadhrat ’Umar Fárúq رضی الله تعالی عنه. Here follows another qissah.

Qissas concerning Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه

A person throwing abuse at Imámsáhib رحمة الله عليه

You must have heard of Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه Whether you follow Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه or Imám Sháfí رحمة الله عليه, or any of the other Imáms, they were all ahlulláh. They were all buzurgs. There are several qissas concerning Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه. This is but one:

Imámsáhib – that is, Imám Abú Hanífah رحمة الله عليه – was returning home after having given his lessons. Along the way he encountered somebody who had great animosity towards him. The ahlulláh also have enemies, whose animosity has no basis whatsoever, but people develop hasad, and so forth. for them.

This person started following Imámsáhib hurling a tirade of abuse at him along the way. Many were the harsh and offensive words uttered by him, but Imámsáhib kept on walking. When Imámsáhib came to the door of his house, he stopped and turned to address this person: “This is the door to my house. I will not go in as yet. I will stand here and wait. Whatever you still wish to tell me, tell me because, were I to go in, whatever you still desire to say, good or bad, will still remain in your heart. So, I am placing myself here at your disposal – without hesitation, you may say whatever you wish, quite openly. Your heart should feel happy!”

However, this person kept quiet. Now, when he was given the opportunity to continue his tirade, he kept silent. He then went away.

Yes! Making the heart of one’s adversary happy! This is what is meant to be an ahlulláh!

Nowadays, what do we see? Just let anybody say a word out of place to

him and he starts a fight. Just see how good a Muslim is he! Yes... Say he is a Muslim. But what type of Muslim...? This happens day and night. Let a room-mate say something, an argument follows, then foul language and then a fight. That's it! An end to the friendship.

The purpose of having come here is to bring about a change so that your condition on your return should be an improvement on what it was previously. Your behaviour towards your mates should show an improvement so that they may also comment in admiration: "Oho! Where has he been? He was not like this before! Just look what he has learnt and what he has brought back with him! This is being an álim! Mubárak!"

You are now making tablígh by the pattern of your behaviour.

Answering the question: "What is the taste of faeces?"

Imámsáhib – another qissah about him:

It was one afternoon. At this latter period of Imámsáhib's life his body had become somewhat heavy, causing him some difficulty in moving around. Also, his house was situated on high ground, with a fair number of steps to climb to reach the entrance. This particular afternoon, Imámsáhib had just climbed up the steps, entered his house and had just sat down on the chárpáí (bed) with the intention of lying down to rest, when somebody called out to him from the bottom of the steps: "I wish to ask you some mas'alah. Please come down." Imámsáhib came down and asked: "What is the mas'alah that you wish to know?" The person replied. "Ofo! Just as you had reached the last two or three steps I forgot!" Imámsáhib said: "It is of no consequence. When you remember, you may ask," and Imámsáhib went back up the stairs.

Just as Imámsáhib was about to lie down to rest, this person called out again: "I've remembered! Come down." Imámsáhib climbed down again. This time, too, it was the same story: The person said: "I had remembered, but just as you reached the last step, I forgot!" Sometimes it was the last step that Imámsáhib had reached, sometimes it was the third or fourth last step, but every time it was the same story that he had remembered, but had forgotten again! In this way, he made Imámsáhib climb up and down six or seven times!

Then finally, when Imámsáhib had climbed down and enquired: "What is the mas'alah?" This person replied: "Yes! Yes! Now I remember!" Imámsáhib said: "Go ahead and ask." The person asked. "What is the taste of faeces?"

Let us pause for a moment. Did you hear? He wanted to know what faeces tasted like! Is this a mas'alah? Is this a question to put to anybody? How much trouble and inconvenience did he not cause Imámsáhib, just to ask this? However, with an even temperament (mustaqil-mízáj), with steadfastness (istiqámat), with a firm stance (thábite-qadam), Imámsáhib responded very calmly. "It depends. What type of faeces are you enquiring about: the taste of fresh faeces, or the taste of stale faeces?" The person said: "Well... Both! Tell me the taste of fresh faeces and stale faeces." Imámsáhib answered: "The taste of fresh faeces is sweet, whereas the taste of stale faeces is bitter."

Listen carefully now!

The person said: "What, did you taste each of them?" Imámsáhib replied. "There is no necessity for one to taste each in order to determine these qualities. There are some signs and indications which will equally lead us to this conclusion. I have noticed that flies tend to settle on freshly-passed faeces. Flies are attracted by sweetness. So, one can conclude that freshly-passed faeces taste sweet. Flies do not settle on stale faeces. Bitterness repels flies. So, again, one can conclude that stale faeces are bitter!" The person said: "What you have stated is absolutely correct!" Imámsáhib, in turn, asked him: "Why do you say so?" The person explained. "I knew the answers beforehand!" He explained further: "We were a few people sitting together having a discussion and the question came up: In this present age, who is that person who is a sáhibe-hilm?"

We have explained previously what hilm is. These people wanted to know who is the most accomplished in the quality of hilm, of selflessness, of giving qurbání, of undergoing personal inconvenience for the sake of others.

"It was our unanimous opinion that it was Imám Abú Hanífah. I came specifically to put you to the test so that I could see for myself whether our unanimous opinion was correct or not!"

Do you now understand what is kamále-díndárí, kamále-darjah-ímání? We had quoted just now:

اَلنَّظَافَةُ وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ مِنْ دَرَجَاتِ الْاِيْمَانِ

Cleanliness and good character are among the stages of ímán.

Summary and du'á

It is apparent that ímán also has different levels, wherein is included husne-khulq (good character). You have heard in today's majlis about husne-khulq and the elevated stage it enjoys – husne-khulq has a very high status when it comes to ímán. Nazáfat has not been fully explained, but husne-khulq has been explained in some detail, with illustrating qissas. Ímán, as we had mentioned, has different grades: third, second and first. It is basic that one always tries for the highest level, the first grade, in our worldly affairs. So, when it comes to levels of ímán, why not attempt to attain the highest grade, the first grade? Ímán is fundamental! It comes first! Here, why do you sit back content with second and third grades?

To reiterate: ímán has different levels. Husne-khulq has an important role, a high status, in one's ímán. You have heard what the definition of husne-khulq is and you have heard qissas illustrating some aspects of husne-khulq. Ahlulláh – members of the household of Alláh! Husne khulq is compulsory in the ahlulláh! An important quality constituting husne-khulq is hilm. Selflessness (ithár), qurbání, to give preference to others, have all been explained.

May Alláh Ta'álá grant all of us – all Muslims in general and the tálibáne-'ilm and the tálibáne-tazkíyahe-nafs specifically – with increasing ikhlás, the taufíq to attain the highest levels of ímán, thereby decorating and embellishing us all by means of husne-khulq; and also the taufíq to continually make du'á for taufíq.

Khudá háfiz.

A NOTE FROM THE TRANSLATOR

May Alláh reward all those who assisted in the preparation of this booklet

(and all the previous booklets) and give them all jazá-e-khair. A very able team, whose members have preferred to remain anonymous all these years, has been assisting the translator in the compilation of these booklets.

Just to remind readers: These are not word-for-word translations, but that minimal editing has taken place. Therefore, there may well be discrepancies between these English translations and the originals. Hopefully, these will be of a minor nature. Should there be any significant errors in these translations, this is the result solely of the incompetence of the translator and not of anybody else.

In-shá-Alláh, it is hoped that by now the reader has developed a ta'alluq with a sheikh-e-kámil, or one of the 'ulemá-e-haqq, seeing that close to six years have passed since the publication of Booklet Number One in 1989 and this present booklet (Number Eight). Therefore, should there be any points not understood or any errors or discrepancies detected, the reader is urged to clarify these points with his sheikh.

Should any reader still not have a ta'alluq with a sheikh-e-kámil, he/she is urged to study the chapter on "The Need For A Sheikh" in Hadhratjí's رحمة الله عليه kitáb "Sharí'at And Tasawwuf," or the reader may refer to any of the kitábs on Tasawwuf by our recognised akábir dealing with this topic.

Dr.I.M.

BOOKLET NUMBER NINE

Safar 1417 – July 1996

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Alhamdulilláh, through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our sheikh رحمة الله عليه this ninth booklet is ready.

The majlis that has been translated in this issue was conducted way back in 1983 while Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه was visiting South Africa. However, the topics discussed are as relevant today as they were at that time. This is a remarkable feature of Hadhrat's رحمة الله عليه majális – they remain "evergreen".

Not only are relevant topics brought to our notice, but, together with the discussion, certain underlying principles are also discussed so that these majális remain appropriate for all times. The reader should not, therefore, merely "enjoy" reading the different qissas, but he/she should also try to understand the underlying principles that are being enunciated.

That is why Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه time and again asks: "Do you understand?" "Is my voice reaching you?" "Can you hear?" And so forth. It is not that the words or the qissas are not being heard or understood. Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه is actually drawing our attention to a specific point that is being made, an underlying principle that is being enunciated and a subtle aspect that is being placed in perspective. We are expected to take special note and remember the point that is being driven home at this particular juncture in connection with that particular qissah.

May Alláh Ta'álá grant us the taufíq arzání to continually benefit from Hadhrat's رحمة الله عليه teachings. Ámín.

Dr.I.M.

[This is a translation of a majlis-e-khás held by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sahib رحمة الله عليه *during his visit to South Africa. Approximate date: January 1983. Venue: Lenasia, Johannesburg.]*

’ADL, FADHL AND ZULM

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

It was being stated at Navlákhí Sáhib’s place that with Alláh Ta’álá there is only ’adl (justice) and fadhl (bounty/ mercy/ graciousness). The question of zulm (injustice/ oppression) does not arise at all, not even remotely.

Why?

The reason is that zulm is the manifestation of an enormous imperfection or defect of the highest degree. Whereas it is a fundamental part of ímán, accepted and affirmed, that Záte-Bárí Ta’álá is free and pure of all manner of faults, defects and weaknesses. Thus, there can be absolutely no question of zulm from Alláh Ta’álá!

This much He has stated quite emphatically as well:

إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ ۚ

Verily, Alláh Ta’álá does not cause even an atom of zulm. (S.4.40.)

“Inna” (verily) denotes an emphasis, denoting that “there is absolutely no doubt in the matter”.

So, either there is ’adl or there is fadhl.

With the mu’min, Záte-Bárí Ta’álá’s dealings are based absolutely and completely on fadhl (bounty/ mercy/ graciousness). The question of mere ’adl (justice) does not arise at all.

Is my voice reaching you? Or should I speak still louder?

To repeat: With the mu’min-bandah, Záte-Bárí Ta’álá’s dealings are based absolutely and completely on fadhl. The question of mere ’adl does not arise at all. ’Adl is the manner in which Alláh Ta’álá deals with the kuffár.

This state exists while we are in this world as well as when we will be in the ákhirat.

If any difficulty befalls a mu’min, whether the difficulty relates to his physical body (ján) or to his wealth (mál) or his honour (ábrú), it may

appear externally to be a difficulty – from appearances it may look like an upset – in reality it is not a difficulty or upset, provided that he accepts the problem in the context of his ímán and his connection with Alláh Ta'álá.

If an illness befalls the mu'min, it is His fadhl. If some material loss occurs, that is also His fadhl. If some incident occurs that causes dishonour or disgrace, that is also His fadhl!

Present, past and future of a neglectful mu'min

This needs some explanation. Take the case of a neglectful mu'min:

As for the present, he is enjoying his position. He continues to live in a state which is contrary to the wishes of Záte-Bárí Ta'álá, with no concern for the state he is in.

As for the past, he is unconcerned about that also: As for that period that has passed before the present moment, for whatever shortcomings he had, for whatever wrongs he had committed, he is unrepentant. He does not make taubah.

As for the future? He does not let his gaze fall there. He should have certain basic beliefs as far as the future is concerned, like the acceptance of Qiyámat and the fear (khauf) that this belief should generate and, having developed this fear, that he should stop those actions which are contrary to the wishes of Alláh Ta'álá, but he does not stop.

Having just ímán and Islam are not the same

So, there is no doubt as far as his ímán is concerned, but there is a weakness as far as his Islám is concerned. The reason is that ímán is connected to tasdíq (attestation), whereas Islám is connected to a'mál and akhláq. And Záte-Bárí Ta'álá has no desire that any mu'min should go into Jahannam.

Do you understand? To repeat: Haqq Ta'álá does not wish that any mu'min should go into Jahannam.

But if any mu'min himself or herself desires to go into Jahannam, what then? Then Alláh Ta'álá will endorse his wish: Very well, you shall be sent there!

The mu'min's desire may not be verbal, but he knows that there are certain actions and activities, certain statements and conversations, certain states

and conditions, all of which Haqq Ta'álá has shown quite clearly will be a cause for him to go into Jahannam. Despite this, he is not prepared to stop himself from these and then it is as if he is saying: "These calamities may throw me into Jahannam, but here and now I am going to enjoy myself!"

So, he goes ahead and he gambles, he drinks alcohol, he commits ziná, he steals, he deceives and he commits fraud!

These sinful activities are connected to "Islámiyet" and not "ímániyet".

May Alláh Ta'álá safeguard and maintain our ímán, your ímán and the ímán of all Muslims till our last breath. Ámín. Then there will be nothing, but the uttermost victory, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá.

To continue: Alláh Ta'álá has no desire to send any mu'min to Jahannam. And how is it possible that he should wish to do so?

Once, Rasúlulláh's صلى الله عليه وسلم majlis-sharíf was in progress. The sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم were sitting in attendance. A woman was approaching. At that stage the complete set of regulations concerning the observation of purdah had not been revealed as yet. The woman was carrying her suckling infant in her arms and the infant was being suckled on her breast as she walked. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Do you see that woman, how lovingly she is clutching her infant and feeding the infant on her breast? Do you observe?" The sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم replied: "O Rasúlulláh!" صلى الله عليه وسلم "Yes, we do observe!"

Some rules regarding the recitation of Durúd Sharíf

Let us digress for a moment:

If, during the course of a majlis the honoured name of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is taken, then it is fardh to recite Durúd Sharíf once. If the honoured name of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is repeated and his name is mentioned time and again, then to recite Durúd Sharíf on every occasion is mustahab. This applies even if it is not a majlis and an individual by himself takes the name of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. So, at least once one should recite Durúd Sharíf:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَاوَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ سَيِّدِنَاوَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَّبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

The Durúd Sharíf that this servant has just recited is the very one that Hadhratwálá (Hadhrat Thánwí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه) used to recite, commenting: "This is the Durúd Sharíf I am in the habit of reciting." It made me extremely happy because I also used to read this Durúd Sharíf.

In the mu'ámulát of the Auliyá-Alláh, of the ahlulláh, the wird, the zikr that is recited all the time finally settles down to the recitation of Durúd Sharíf. They have recited an excessive amount of zikr, yet finally they settle on reciting Durúd Sharíf.

Why?

I have to explain this by asking a question:

Dear Sáhib! If a person is wearing clothes that are filthy and, on top of it the clothes are emitting a bad odour, will one place 'itar on such clothes? Quite rightly, the answer is: No! Only after the clothes are washed and ironed very well and the person has made ghusl, as on Fridays and the day of Eid – or some people shower and change their clothes daily – then only is 'itar applied. So, first comes the cleansing and washing, then the application of 'itar.

Istighfár is a cleansing

In a like manner, other tasbíhs may be recited, well and good. The tasbíh of istighfár is one such tasbíh that is recited regularly. This tasbíh cleanses the dirt – i.e. sins – within. One should never be neglectful of this tasbíh. Alláh Ta'álá made even the malá'ikah recite istighfár once. This transpired as follows: When Alláh Ta'álá was about to create Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام the malá'ikah were perturbed and said: "O Alláh! You wish to create Man, whereas he will shed blood:

قَالُوٓا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيْهَا مَنْ يُّفْسِدُ فِيْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ ۚ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ؕ

They said: "Will You place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we glorify Your praise and sanctify You?

"We are Your servants. If You have any other work, we are ever prepared to serve You. Show us any other task and we will carry it out."

Alláh Ta'álá replied:

قَالَ إِنِّيٓ أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

Surely I know what you know not. (S.2.30.)

Alláh Ta'álá knew the wisdom of His action. The malá'ikah were suddenly made aware that they had erred in raising a query and they immediately felt contrite at their indiscretion, at their rashness. They pleaded to be forgiven.

"Very well. You have not committed any sin – you have not acted contrary to any Order of Mine. However, you had made certain statements thereby being involved in an indiscretion, of which you are now aware and of which you are now contrite. This is a very high, a very elevated angelic quality. Go and perform wudhú."

The very first instance that any creation performed wudhú was on this occasion when the malá'ikah were ordered to perform wudhú. This information forms part of ancient historical relevance; and a lot of importance is laid on historically relevant events. The malá'ikah went ahead and performed wudhú. Alláh Ta'álá then ordered them: "Recite istighfár, as follows:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللّٰهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَ اَتُوْبُ اِلَيْكَ

'I glorify You, O Alláh! And recite Your praises. I testify that there is no god besides You. I seek Your forgiveness and I turn to You in repentance.' "

Thus, insán Musalmán should not be negligent at any time as far as istighfár is concerned. Even after making salám at the completion of namáz he should still recite istighfár:

رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ ۝

My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of all who show mercy. (S.23.118.)

This should be read at least once. The reason for reciting istighfár is that even our 'ibádat is not free of shortcomings.

To continue: Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had drawn the attention of the

sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم to the woman lovingly clutching her infant to her breast and feeding it. Did she not love her child? The sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم replied: "Yes, O Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم ! She is showing extreme love for her child." Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم then said: "To a much, much, much greater extent does Záte-Bárí Ta'álá love a mu'min!"

That Zát (Being) that has instilled such a great degree of love for the infant into the heart of the mother, to what a greater degree will He not have love for the mu'min, who is His "child"? This being so one may ask: Does a loving father ever cause harm to come to his child knowingly? Even if he were to hit his child, is it his purpose that the child should be wilfully harmed?

Of course not! It will be for the child's tarbiyet – for his character-training. So, the father's hitting his child for the sake of the child's tarbiyet – is it a mercy (rahmat) or is it tyranny (zulm)?

We are all agreed that it is a rahmat and not zulm; it is showing bounteousness and kindness and not enmity.

This is sufficient proof to show that it is unimaginable that Záte-Bárí Ta'álá, whose name is also "Mu'min"– this being one name from the Names and Attributes that He has – will cause any harm to his mu'min-bandah. With him He does not deal with 'adl even, but His dealings are based purely on fadhl.

Therefore, should any incident occur at any time contrary to one's temperament – and such incidents fall into three categories: (a) life and health (ján), (b) wealth (mál) and (c) honour (ábrú) – and one has ímán within oneself, then one should never, but never, bring negative thoughts to mind concerning Záte-Bárí Ta'álá: one should never perceive it as zulm – then what would remain of one's ímán? No. One should not even perceive it as 'adl. How should one perceive it? One should perceive it as fadhl.

And, Hadhrat, when this concept is firmly embedded in the heart that this mu'min is being treated with fadhl, then the mu'min, irrespective of how great a sinner he may be, will never feel crushed. Yes, he may develop some grief in his heart as a natural, instinctive reaction, but he will not become demoralised. No. He will immediately turn his attention in the direction indicated. This is the shán of a mu'min – this is his noble and

dignified status.

So, for a short while he will experience some grief. And grief he must experience. If he were not to experience any grief, then on what occasion will he make sabr and how will he attain the maqám of sabr?

The maqám of sabr has three aspects

The maqám (rank) of sabr has three aspects to it:

1. To make sabr at the time of having to perform ibádat.

For example: One's mood was such that one had no desire to perform namáz. However, one's temperament was kept in check, and namáz was performed. Whatever burden the tabiyet felt, whatever distaste he may have experienced, were completely ignored and namáz was performed. This is termed sabr-alat-tá'át.

2. To make sabr when the tabiyet inclines towards sin.

For example: A pretty face passes by, the eyes become corrupt, but immediately sensibility prevails and he scolds himself: "What! Is Alláh Ta'álá not watching you? Have you no shame? Do you have no khauf for Alláh Ta'álá, that you will be standing in front of Him on the Day of Qiyámat? What answer will you give then?" With this awareness, he immediately angrily recites: "Lá-howla..." and he opposes the immoral inclination of the nafs. He has not given in to the nafs. This is sabr at the time of impending sin. His tabiyet was inclining towards sin, was being attracted towards sin. He opposed his nafs and the nafs found it vexing and unpleasant, but he kept full control over his tabiyet. He maintained an even temperament – mustaqil-mízáj! This is termed sabr-anil-ma'siyet.

3. There is a third category as well: This is to make sabr when faced with some difficulty.

For example: Some incident has occurred contrary to one's tabiyet, causing difficulty, harm or grief, in connection with one's ján, mál or ábrú. For instance, a child passes away, or one's money or goods have been stolen, or one's honour has been besmirched. When this happens the tabiyet is upset – it feels burdened as if a heavy load has been placed on it. However, immediately the understanding is there: "This is not from my side – I did not request this difficulty. This is from that Zát who has created me. There

is some wisdom in it. There must be some good in it for me. It is to save me from some future harm. If my child were to have survived, I do not know how he would have behaved towards me. Would he have brought me comfort and happiness, or brought me grief? Would he have brought me honour, or disgrace? If my daughter would have lived, I do not know if she would have been a cause for my dishonour, or what could have happened!"

A qissah appears in the Qur'án sharíf:

Qissah of Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام **and Hadhrat Khidr** عليه السلام

After being ferried across a river in a boat – and not being charged a fee either – Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام damaged the boat by making a hole in it. Quite shocked, Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام questioned Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام: "What have you done?" Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام replied: "I had told you from earlier on that you will not be able to stay with me. My actions are such that they will appear to you to be contrary to the Sharí'at."

Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام was allocated to do certain duties – he carried out those duties which Alláh Ta'álá had ordered him to carry out independently. This is termed "takwíniyet".

As Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام and Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام proceeded farther, it so happened that they came across a child who was playing among other children. Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام went and grabbed him by the neck and killed him. This episode is narrated in the Qur'án sharíf in Súrah Kahf (The Cave. S.18.60-82). Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام was even more shocked than previously and said: "You have taken the life of this innocent, sinless child! What have you done?" Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام replied: "I had told you from earlier on that you and I are incompatible. You had said that you will bear patiently with me. I had said that you should not say anything, but this is the second time that you have spoken."

Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام said: "Everything in three's. Grant me one more opportunity." They proceeded farther and came to a settlement. They came across a house with a wall leaning precariously, about to collapse. Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام placed his back against the wall and pushed it straight again. Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام blurted out: "What have you done? We came to this

place absolutely famished, with no food with us to eat. The people of this settlement should have invited us for meals, seeing we are visitors."

Even if one person had invited them, the responsibility on the whole community would have been lifted – the fardhe-kifáyah would have been fulfilled.

"However, they never even came to ask. And then you went to repair the wall free-of-charge! If you wanted to fix the wall, you should have asked for a fee for your service."

Hadhrat Khidr عليه السلام said: "You had requested three opportunities, which you have received. It is now time for us to part ways. But, before we part, let me relate the reasons underlying my actions. Firstly, my making a hole in the boat: The king who resides up-river from that place is a big tyrant. Whenever he and his men set out on the river they capture and confiscate any sound and sea-worthy vessel they can lay their hands on. The owner would have lost his boat. By my making a hole in the boat the king would have seen that it is damaged and the owner would be saved from the tyranny of the king. After the king has passed the owner would repair the boat."

There are many masá'il involved here. However, I will not discuss it now as it will take up too much time.

"Secondly, you felt that an innocent child had been killed. Yes? Well, this very child, as time goes on, would have been the cause for his pious parents to become káfir. I had been commanded to end his life in order to protect the ímán of his parents. Their love for him was so intense that they could have become káfir. Thirdly, the wall: The reason for my repairing it is the following: The owner, father of two young children, had buried a treasure under the wall before he had departed from this world. In his lifetime the father was a pious and saintly person, díndár and an Alláh-wálá. The wall was about to collapse. Had it collapsed, the wealth belonging to the orphaned minor (ná-báligh) children would have been exposed. The inhabitants of this place would have gathered and carried away whatever wealth each one could lay his hands on. I was commanded to repair the wall to prevent this so that the wealth will go to the rightful owners, the two orphaned brothers, when they become grown-ups. Now

tell me, are there still objections? But what I have shown is that you and I are incompatible."

Do you understand?

Now, this making a hole in the boat, the killing of the child and the repairing of the wall – were these not acts of mercy? However, Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام is a Rasúl and it is his duty to indicate what the Sharí'at states, to give orders according to it and act according to it himself. The affairs of takwín were not in his hands. Therefore, any difficulty that comes to pass, either physically, or concerning wealth, or honour affecting either oneself or one's relatives or friends – then all of these are fadhl from Haqq Ta'álá, rahmat from Haqq Ta'álá.

Once you have understood the above, then you would be able to understand the following: When the time for obedience and for 'ibádat arrives and the person's tabiyet develops an aversion to these and he wishes to avoid these, but, instead he ignores his feelings completely and he takes courage in both hands and carries out that act of obedience and ibádat, he will attain 300 darjas (elevation in spiritual status).

The thawáb for that 'ibádat he will receive, but, in addition, he will also attain 300 darjas. These darjas are heavenly elevations. These 300 darjas are attained on tá'at and ibádat. What if, on the other hand, some act pertaining to sin presents itself and one stops oneself in time? As mentioned previously, his lustful gaze settles on some pretty, beautiful face and he has an inclination to stare with evil intent, with corrupt thoughts, but he immediately and forcefully stops himself. He feels ashamed. A sense of hayá (modesty) engulfs him, khauf of Alláh Ta'álá overwhelms him. He restrains himself. This person will attain 600 darjas! Just think – on performing 'ibádat he attains 300 darjas, but on abstaining from sin he attains 600 darjas!

Why?

The reason is that the degree of force and toil required to perform 'ibádat is not as great as the degree of force and toil required to curtail the desires and perversity of the nafs.

Now, (Alláh forbid!) take it that somebody encounters events contrary to his tabiyet – there is loss of health or loss of wealth or loss of honour. He did

not wish these difficulties on himself, but these difficulties came on a ghair-ikhtiyárí basis. But he now makes sabr – he swallows the bitter-aloe tasting draught of sabr as if it was sweet-tasting sharbat. He undergoes emotional suffering – heartache and grief have to be experienced, otherwise what is there to make sabr on? And how will one attain the maqám of sabr?

So, the maqám of sabr in 'ibádat has the value of 300 darjas; the maqám of sabr at abstaining from sin has the value of 600 darjas; and the maqám of sabr at the time of difficulty – when some loss occurs with regard to life, wealth or honour and one keeps silent and tranquil and one neither brings any complaint to one's lips nor does one harbour any ill-feelings in the heart – then the value to such sabr is 900 darjas

Just imagine! 900 darjas! This is in addition to receiving whatever thawáb that is due to him on being confronted with these difficulties, provided that he dies with ímán. Is this not fadhl and rahmat?

Qissah by Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه

Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه has written a qissah:

You may have heard of people residing in remote rural areas and whose means of earning consist of going to the towns and habitations, buying grain, and so forth, and then selling these elsewhere. Their permanent places of residence remain in out-of-the-way wildernesses.

Imám Ghazálí رحمة الله عليه writes a qissah of one such group of people who lived in a few houses in some wilderness. Each household possessed a dog, a cock and a donkey. The donkey was there to transport trading goods from one area to another in order to sell these goods there. The dog was there to protect the household from thieves, and so forth. The cock would crow early in the morning and the people in the house would come to know that it was nearly dawn and they would rouse from sleep. Each house in the area had these three animals.

There was a buzurg and his wife who also lived in one of the houses. They also possessed these three animals. One day a wolf came and killed the donkey.

The wife commented drily to her husband: "You see that? The donkey is dead! Now, how are you going to go about to earn a living? Others will go

out to do their buying and selling and enjoy themselves. But your donkey is dead!" The husband merely said: "Alhamdulilláh!" This enraged the wife even more. After all, is she not a woman? "Wáh! The donkey is gone and with it our livelihood and all you can say is: 'Alhamdulilláh!' " The husband calmly repeated: "Alhamdulilláh!"

The next day, when the buzurg came home, he found that the dog had suddenly died. His wife confronted him, remarking sarcastically: "Say again: 'Alhamdulilláh!' The dog has died! The houses of the others will be protected, but your house will be looted! Yes, say it, say: 'Alhamdulilláh' " The husband was unperturbed by her sarcasm. He calmly said: "Alhamdulilláh!"

On the third day, a fox came and carried the cock away. The wife said: "See what good your 'Alhamdulilláh!' has brought you – the cock is also gone! Now you can sleep till late in the mornings! Everybody else will be getting up early and will be setting out for their work and earning good profits in their trading – while you will be still fast asleep! Yes, the cock is also dead." The husband merely said: "Alhamdulilláh!" She carried on, but each time he would respond by saying simply "Alhamdulilláh!"

On the fourth day, they really got up late, seeing that the cock was not there to wake them up by its crowing. The wife started again: "I had warned you that this would happen! All you could do was say 'Alhamdulilláh!'. Everybody has gone to work by now and you got up only now." The husband was his normal cool and calm self and he consoled his wife: "Dear wife! It is nothing to be upset about. Alhamdulilláh!"

The husband got up, made his preparations – wudhú, namáz and so forth – and then headed for the door. He opened the door, stepped out and... stopped dead in his tracks! "That is most unusual – the neighbour's front door is open. And what is that? His dog is lying dead outside!" As he entered their gate to investigate there was no evidence of the cock. When he entered the house he found that all those dwelling in the house were lying dead! All the members of the household had been slain!

As he wandered from house to house, he came across the same scene – the dogs and cocks either killed or missing and none of the inhabitants alive! The husband went back to his house and told the wife: "See here! Alhamdulilláh! Come with me and have a look!" He took her to all the

houses to witness the tragedies. "Are the dogs alive? Are the cocks alive? Are any of the people alive?" he asked her. "Hái! What happened?" she asked. He explained to her: "This is why I said 'Alhamdulilláh!' At our gate there was no dog. In our yard there was neither a cock nor a donkey. The thieves must have come at night to all the houses, saw signs of these animals and knew that the houses were inhabited. At each place they killed the animals, entered the houses and killed those in the houses and took away all their wealth. They must have come to our house as well, but there was no dog, no cock and no donkey, as at the other houses. Obviously, they thought that our house was deserted. What was to be gained from coming inside?"

This qissah appears in Imám Ghazálí's رحمة الله عليه writings.

Do you understand?

So, the dog dying, the cock dying and the donkey dying – were these calamities or were they acts of rahmat? Obviously, these were acts of mercy. Kásh! Would it not be wonderful if we mu'minín being mu'min, should understand such affairs from Alláh Ta'álá to be acts of fadhl for us!

So, whatever events occur contrary to one's tabiyet will cause grief, grief that is temporary. Such grief will occur and should occur, otherwise how will one attain the maqám of sabr?

Occasions for sabr and shukr

Do you understand? Perhaps my voice is not reaching you. You are not falling asleep by any chance? No? Very good! Alhamdulilláh!

There are only two possible situations one can encounter while existing in this world. Events that occur are either agreeable and in harmony with one's tabiyet; or the opposite – events are contrary and in disharmony with one's tabiyet. There is no third possibility. In the first instance, the tabiyet desires a certain event to occur in a certain way and it happens that way. In the second instance, the tabiyet desires a certain event to occur in a certain way and the opposite happens. So, events occur in accordance to one's tabiyet, or contrary to it.

When events take place in accordance to one's tabiyet, this is an occasion for shukr. When one makes shukr Alláh Ta'álá states:

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيْدَنَّكُمْ

If you give thanks, I will grant you more. (S.14.7.)

Also, concerning shukr, Záte-Bárí Ta'álá states at another place in the Qur'án sharíf, something very beautiful, something brimming with muhabbat:

مَّا يَفْعَلُ اللهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَ اٰمَنْتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ اللهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيْمًا ۝

What can Alláh gain by your punishment if you are grateful and you believe? Verily, it is Alláh that appreciates (all good) and knows all things. (S.4.147.)

By punishing, you will Alláh Ta'álá's honour and dignity increase? Alláh Ta'álá will remain as He is. What a beautiful statement!

So, if any event takes place in accordance with one's tabiyet say: "Al-hamdulilláh!" Make shukr. And if any event takes place contrary to one's tabiyet, make sabr – the virtues and stages of which have been outlined above.

إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِيْنَ ۝

Verily, Alláh is with those who make sabr. (S.2.153.)

When any occurrence takes place contrary to one's tabiyet one should display the quality of sabr. Thereafter, one should perform ibádat:

يَآَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَ الصَّلوٰةِ ۚ

O you who believe! Seek help by making sabr and salát. (S.2.153.)

It is apparent that what takes precedence is correcting one's bátin and that the performance of záhirí good deeds (á'malus-sálihát) comes afterwards.

Do you understand?

If a person has not attained the akhláqe-fádhilah (praiseworthy qualities) – among which sabr enjoys a very high position – then, Hadhrat, even this person's 'ibádat will not be performed properly and carefully. Even if he were to make ibádat, there would be no constancy – that 'ibádat would be performed sometimes and sometimes he would leave it. Because of an imperfection in his akhláq, this would be the effect.

Do you understand? Are these topics not of use? Having understood these, does your tabiyet not feel lighter? These topics should settle firmly in the heart for future reference.

So, the mu'min insán can never be free of these two qualities – sabr and shukr. And remember, in every situation, Alláh Ta'álá deals with His mu'min bandah with fadhl upon fadhl. The question of mere 'adl does not arise at all.

Taqwá and tawádhu

That is why it is necessary to be diligent and take care of two features: one is taqwá and the other is tawádhu.

Taqwá is the following: One does not do anything contrary to the orders of Alláh Ta'álá.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اتَّقُوااللهَ

O you who believe! Be fearful of (and take the necessary precautions – and save yourselves from) contravening the Orders of Alláh Ta'álá.

Tawádhu is the following: At no time should you harbour any contempt in your heart for anybody.

Just see the tawádhu and abdiyet of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Alláhu-Akbar! The quality of his humility, his humbleness, his self-effacement is legendary.

Núr and faiz

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is núr upon núr! In reality, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was núr from his very inception. It was for our ta'lím and to act as an example and a model for us that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was sent.

By the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá a thought has come to mind – listen carefully: Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is undoubtedly núr. However, there is more to it than that. Actually, Záte-Bárí Ta'álá desired that through Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم we should attain some faiz – faiz-e-'ilmí and faiz-e-amalí (spiritual blessings in knowledge and deeds). However, faiz cannot be attained without some physical component being attached to that metaphysical núr. Núr does not

express itself in words. Just like the sun and the moon: despite emitting light, they do not utter words. Thus, Záte-Bárí Ta'álá sent that núr which he had created, into this world, clothing it with a physical body – a body that was the best, more beautiful and handsome than any other creation – and that this embodiment of núr should transmit to us faiz-e-'ilmí and faiz-e-amalí.

This is our 'aqídah. To repeat: Záte-Bárí Ta'álá clothed that núr which He had created, with a physical body in order that we may attain faiz-e-'ilmí and faiz-e-amalí through the person of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Thus, do we not subscribe to this concept that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is núr? Has anybody denied it? We subscribe to it with a great deal of charm and beauty.

Once that núr had been blessed with a physical body, it is quite obvious that all those matters pertaining to a physical body will also apply to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم: . The need to eat and drink; a family life; occurrences of happy events and also sad events; physical tiredness; illness; and so forth. All these pertain to a physical body and all these were experienced by Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم fell ill; he grieved at times; tears were seen falling from his eyes; he married as well; he had children and so forth.

Such faiz cannot become manifest by pure núr on its own. If it were possible, then the malá'ikah were sufficient as they are created from and exist as núr and it would not have been necessary to create the Ambiyá عليهم السلام in human form. Yes, the malá'ikah would have sufficed. However, we are unable to attain faiz from the malá'ikah. For example: If the malá'ikah were to order us: "Keep continuous rozas!" we would never have been able to carry out this order. We would have complained: "We are unable to." "Whyever not?" "Because we suffer from hunger," we would have replied. "Hunger? Hunger? What is this hunger that you speak about?" How do the malá'ikah know what hunger is? They have never experienced hunger.

Another example: They would have instructed us: "Stay awake the whole night in 'ibádat!" We would have said: "We cannot stay awake the whole night." "Why can you not?" "We get tired," we would have replied. "Tired? Tired? What is 'tired'?" The malá'ikah have never experienced tiredness. A

human being will experience these physical conditions. So, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, being núr that is embodied, felt the effects of all those conditions which a physical body is affected by.

Jinn can adopt different forms

Take Jinn. They have the power to adopt different physical forms. Whatever form a Jinn adopts, that Jinn will then manifest the effects of the particular form it has adopted. Now, even among the Jinn one finds that they have different social classes – upper classes of Jinn and lower classes of Jinn. Those Jinn from a low class will adopt the form of a low class of animal when they wish to adopt a physical form. Whereas those Jinn who belong to the upper classes will not adopt the forms of the lower classes of animal like the cat, the mouse, the snake, and so forth. They will adopt the form of the more "noble" or "royal" animals. Jinn are capable of changing their forms because of their original refined nature.

A human being as well, were he to refine the physical constituents of his body by means of riyádhat to a level of extreme exquisiteness he may, if he so wishes, at any given moment change the form of his body from its original to another. The original human figure may then even be visible as several other human figures. However, the laws of the Sharí'at will still be incumbent on the original elemental human figure even though there may be other separate figures visible. This is possible that one figure transforms itself into a separate figure.

A qissah illustrating the changing of form of a buzurg

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه related the following qissah:

A buzurg went to make wudhú. The namáz had already started. The buzurg was a bit slow in making his wudhú. By the time the namáz had ended he had not finished making his wudhú. The imámsáhib, who was an álim, had taken note of this. He addressed the buzurg: "Janáb, if you had been quick with your wudhú and had joined the jamá'at in namáz, what a good thing would it not have been! As it is, you have missed your namáz with jamá'at." The buzurg replied: "But do you not see? I am making namáz!"

Now, when the imámsáhib turned to look at the saff he saw, quite true,

the figure of the buzurg making namáz! The imám-sáhib, however, was an álim. He addressed the buzurg: "Janáb, forgive me, but this figure making namáz is your projected image (jissam-mithálí), it is not your original body (jissam-unsurí) and the namáz that is fardh is fardh on your original body, the one created from sand." The buzurg, realising his error, admitted to it. "I have erred. Please forgive me. I make taubah. I shall not do so again in future."

Do you see how important it is to have 'ilm? Otherwise, as happened to the buzurg, one can fall into error.

Coming back to the point made earlier: The body can change its form. A human being, by undertaking certain special spiritual exercises (riyádhát) – mind you, not by mujáhadah, but by riyádhát – can develop a certain refinement and exquisiteness, which will then manifest in certain extraordinary characteristics. Such as with Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه.

Shah Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus رحمة الله عليه and the jogí

Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه was not born in Gangoh, but hailed originally from a settlement in the district of Ambalah. In the age in which he lived, the Hindu jogís held tremendous sway and power over the populace. These jogís undertook tremendous self-disciplinary exercises which resulted in the human body exhibiting some amazing characteristics. Now, Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه came to know, while still in Ambalah, of a certain Hindu jogí. The jogí lived in the district of Saháranpur in the village of Gangoh and he was leading the Muslims astray through a display of the amazing feats that he commanded.

Hadhrat Mauláná Thánwí رحمة الله عليه related this qissah to us. Why? So that we may safeguard our ímán and avoid being led astray by those who want to lead us astray.

Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه came to Gangoh. He enquired from the people on the whereabouts of this jogí. The people told him that the jogí did not stay in the village, but lived somewhere away from there, in the jungle. Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه went to the area he was directed to and came upon a small bungalow made of brick

and mud. Trying to find the entrance, he went around all four sides, but found no door! The structure had four walls, but no door was to be seen!

Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه noticed a person sitting nearby. He went up to him and asked: “Are you the jogí residing here?” This person replied: “No. I am merely his disciple.” Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه asked: “Then, where is your gurú?” The disciple replied: “He is in that bungalow.” Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه asked in amazement: “In that bungalow? But I have just been right around it, but I do not see any sign of a door on any of the four sides! From where does he enter and from where does he leave?” The disciple replied: “Do you see that wall? It has a small skylight towards the top. He enters and leaves through that.” Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه said: “Ofo! He actually goes in through that small hole and goes out from it as well? Very well. We will do the same.”

With a nimble leap Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه reached the small skylight, went through it and alighted in the room inside. Truly, the jogí was in the room, but he was in such deep meditation that he was not aware of the visitor having entered. Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه sat on one side and waited.

When the jogí finally came out of his meditation, then only did he become aware of another person sitting in his room – a stranger and, from his appearance, not belonging to his, the jogí’s, religion. “Who are you?” he asked. “From my appearance, who do I look like?” “You appear to be a Muslim.” “I am a Muslim,” replied Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه. The jogí asked: “How did you enter?” “In the same way that you entered.” “Through that niche in the wall?” “Through the very same!”

The jogí realised that this was no ordinary person, but somebody of a high status. He came straight to the point: “Janáb, I understand very well your challenge. But let me put it to you that until you do not find out and adopt our ways and you do not make me your teacher in this, you will never reach the stage of kamál.” Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه asked: “May I ask, what is the highest point of perfection that you have reached?” The jogí replied: “The highest point of perfection is this that while I sit here I can transform myself into a pool of water.” Sháh Hadhrat

’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه said: “Very well. Prove it to me.”

The jogí, while sitting, suddenly turned into a pool of water. Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه went over, took some of the jogí’s clothes and dipped these in the pool of water. These clothes he kept to one side. The jogí transformed himself back to his original physical body.

Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه said: “Truly, we have seen how you transformed yourself into water. Very well, we shall also transform ourselves into water. However, the request I have is that you should dip some of my clothes in the water and keep them on one side.” The jogí said: “I’ll do that.”

Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه also, while sitting, transformed himself into a pool of water. The jogí took some of Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí’s رحمة الله عليه clothes, dipped them in the pool of water and set them aside. Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه reverted back to his original physical body. The contest appeared to be equal. But was it?

Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه addressed the jogí: “Let us evaluate. You entered through the niche in the wall and so did I.” “Agreed” “You then showed me the highest feat you were capable of – transforming yourself into a pool of water. I also did the same.” “Agreed.” “May I ask: did you wet my clothes in the pool of water as I had requested?” “Yes, I did.” “Where have you placed them?” “They are over here.” Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه then said: “I did the same with your clothes and these are your clothes which I have kept one side. Now, first smell your clothes dipped in your water and then you smell my clothes dipped in my water and then you give your verdict.”

The jogí did as instructed and went ahead and smelled both sets of clothing. He then said – remember that he had been through a process of self-discipline, consequently, telling lies was inconceivable – “I have smelled both sets of clothes. From my clothes I perceive a malodour being emitted. And from your clothes I perceive a sweet fragrance being emitted.” Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه said: “Well, then make your judgment.”

The jogí said: “I have already made my judgment. It was my belief that

you would not achieve perfection until you had not acquired what I possess. But, it is just the opposite: for me to attain perfection I have to acquire what you possess. Therefore, please enter me into your religion." Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه told him: "Recite the Kalimah-Tayyibah:

There is no deity worthy of worship except Alláh and Muhammad
صلى الله عليه وسلم *is the Messenger (Rasúl) of Alláh.*

The jogí recited the Kalimah-Tayyibah with a sincere heart and brought ímán. Most of his disciples did the same. This is the manner in which ímán spread in the early times.

To continue: I was saying that when núr is clothed in a physical human body, the physical body will show the traits of a human body. We consider Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم to be núrun-alá-núr (light upon light.) The view that is held that we do not consider Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم to be núr is false.

Brothers, do you understand, or not yet?

The point to be emphasised is this that our hadharáte-akábir – those pious elders who lived before us – have always considered the feats acquired through riyádhát to be mere sport. As a result, they have always remained safe and protected.

In our silsilah, which flows in its latter part through Hadhrat Hají Imdádulláh Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, the greatest of precautions have been taken in the matter of ittibá'-e-sunnat – following the sunnat. Become absolute dust – annihilate yourself – and let the utmost degree of humility come into you.

The humility of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم

Just see how Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم very occasionally used to take water in his cupped hand from the very pond in which the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم used to make wudhú and drink it. Knowing very well that all sorts of hands and feet were washed in the pond, yet Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم used to drink the water.

Some sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم enquired from Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم: "O Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم! Why do you do this? We see that you very occasionally drink water from this pond. What is the reason for this?"

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم replied: "Many hands of the mu'minín have been

dipped in it. It would not be remarkable that there would be an increase in my núr-e-ímán by my drinking with cupped hands from it!"

Can you gauge the degree of humility and humbleness of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم? In yesterday's majlis or in the one held the day before, I narrated the incident where a person had approached Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم and said: "You have beaten me!" Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم responded: "You beat me (in requital)!" Do you see the humility?

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم did not query: "When did I hit you? What was the occasion? What was the reason? Where were you standing? And so forth." No! No! It was a Muslim making a certain statement, so he must be speaking the truth. Why would a Muslim tell a lie? Ímán and lies do not go together, cannot co-exist, so why would he tell lies?

Our pious predecessors have also given us the ta'lím that among the bandah there should be absolutely no violation of the rights of another bandah. Take full and complete precautions against this happening. And ittibá'-e-sunnat – complete obedience to the sunnat – always consider this. That is why our pious predecessors abstained from listening to qawálí.

Samá' and qawálí

Now that this topic has come to my lips, listen carefully. Are you listening? Yes? Very good. Keep on paying attention and ponder! Shukr that an excellent topic has cropped up!

To continue: Ittibá'-e-sunnat.

This is why our hadharát did not direct their attention towards qawálí. When referring to qawálí, what qawálí am I speaking about? I am referring to what was originally known as "samá' ". It is only recently that the word "qawálí" has been used, quite erroneously, in referring to samá'. There are major differences between the two. The qawál of these days is a "gallá-phár" (one who shrieks). He has no concept of the art and science of music.

Mianjí Núr-Muhammad رحمة الله عليه and qawálí

A qawál of that time approached our par-dádá pír (fourth generation upwards in the silsilah), Mianjí Núr-Muhammad Jinjání رحمة الله عليه – whose khalífah was Hají Imdádulláh رحمة الله عليه, mentioned previously – and put the

request to him: “Hadhrat, it is my heart’s desire that you should listen to me. You are also in the Chistiyah-Sáberiyah silsilah and some of the ahlulláh belonging to the Chistiyah have listened to samá’. It is my heart’s desire that you listen to some renderings by myself.” Our par-dádá pír, Mianjí Núr-Muhammadرحمة الله عليه replied: “Bháí, what can I do? My heart also wishes to listen. The fact is that people occasionally ask me to be the imám and, therefore, I have to refuse.”

Do you see the level of taqwá, the depth of it?

Rules governing samá’ (qawálí)

What was the samá’ of those times – what is nowadays confused with present-day qawálí? Listen very carefully now.

The samá’ of those days had very stringent conditions. What were these? As follows:

1. The one rendering the samá’ should also be a “sáhibe-hál”.
2. The content of what he renders, the poetry, should be within the limits of the Sharí’at.
3. The one rendering the samá’ should not be a female and should not be a youth at the pre-pubertal age, one without a beard (That is, neither imrát nor amrad).
4. No musical instruments should be used – no tablah, no sárangí, no harmonium, no guitar.
5. If there is clapping of the hands, this should NOT be in accordance with the rules of music (rhythm, cadence, etc).

Is my voice reaching you? Are you giving this proper thought? These were the stringent conditions applied by those listening to samá’!

Applying these strict conditions, two of our predecessors have listened to samá’ somewhat. One was Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه and the other was Hadhrat Nizámuddín Sultánjí Dehelví رحمة الله عليه.

Samá’ and Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohíرحمة الله عليه

What was the condition of Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه? He suffered from a condition called “hiddate-jismání” (fieriness in the body). The severity of this heat was such that in the cold winter months

an earthenware pot was left outside overnight so that he could bath daily with the icy-cold water in the early part of the morning to keep his body cool. This condition was such that if he did not listen to samá', his skin would peel from parts of his body and blood would ooze out. Listening to samá' was remedial – it was treatment for his hiddate- jismání.

We know that, at times, something that may be ordinarily ná-já'iz may be used as a remedy because of special circumstances. And if the "substance" is já'iz then?

Once, a muhtasib appeared in Gangoh. It was a period of monarchic rule and the muhtasib was a person appointed by the Royal Court to see that nobody is involved in activities contrary to the Sharí'at. On his rounds, the muhtasib visited Gangoh as well. He came to know that samá' was taking place at Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus'رحمة الله عليه place. He lost no time in getting there. "Janáb, I have here a whip in my hand," he said. Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه said: "What are you trying to say?" "Put a halt to the samá'!" The muhtasib ordered. "Very well." Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه ended the samá' and did not arrange any more sessions.

Hál (ecstasy / rapture)

Shortly thereafter, while Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه was up for Tahajjud, a voice reached him reciting the following:

See the trick played by the river,
*The leaf sinks and the stone float*s.

A leaf, being light, should float and a stone, being heavy, should sink. An old woman grinding some corn or wheat on her millstone in the early hours of the morning was reciting this couplet. On hearing the couplet Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه went into a hál. What was there about this couplet that it had this effect on him? On the face of it there was nothing. I shall explain a bit later, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, then you will understand. Yet Sháh sáhib went into a state of ecstasy. The point is this, Hadhrat, that he did not require to listen to qawálí for him to go into a hál!

On another occasion, listening to the swishing sound of the door as it

swung open and close, he again went into a hál. What was it this time? It was the swishing that sounded to him as if the doors were reciting "Alláhu-Alláh! Alláhu-Alláh!"

An incident concerning another buzurg comes to mind: This buzurg was sitting with his khádim-e-khás on the first floor balcony. In the flat below lived another family. Downstairs, the father set out to go to the bazár. His child said: "Abbá, I am also coming with you." The father forbade the child to come, but, a child being a child, refused to listen and insisted on coming – the nagging obstinacy of a child!

The following saying is well known:

- Bálak-hit – the obstinacy of a child;
- Terhá-hit – the obstinacy of anything crooked;
- Ráj-hit – the obstinacy of sovereignty.

The father gave in to the persistence of the child and picked him up. "Fine then, come along." The mother scolded the child: "You have no mercy on your aged father that you finally forced him to pick you up and take you along!" The child replied: "Ammá! Besides him who else do I have? If not in his arms, in whose arms?"

On the balcony above, the buzurg heard the child's reply and immediately went into a state of ecstasy. Was this hál the result of some tablah or sárangí? Was this hál the result of some poetic recital? No! This was the result of the condition of the heart!

This is what it is to be of the sálikín, to be of the zákirín, to be of the muhibbín! This is not to hear some n'at and tear one's kurtah in a fit of passion, so that one may get a new kurtah! This is not an exaggeration – I am relating something that has happened.

To continue: The statement the child had made caused the buzurg to go into a state of ecstasy. The khádim-e-khás enquired of the buzurg: "Hadhrat! What happened that made you to go into a hál and made you twirl in ecstasy?" "Ofo! Did you not hear?" The buzurg asked. "Hear what?" "Did you not hear what the child said?" "I heard. The child merely said: 'Who is there for me besides him?' " Yes! That is it! What flashed into my mind immediately was: Lá-iláha-illalláh! There is only Him! In the whole world there is no other deity, no other objective, no other existence, no

other presence, no other object of love, besides Him! On hearing the child's words, that there is no one besides him, my vision went directly to Lá-iláha-illalláh!"

So, when making zikr of "Lá-iláha-illalláh" make it with the above concept. Then see how much delight and enjoyment you find in your zikr and then see what is produced in your heart!

Reciting it merely as a tasbíh, you will get thawáb, you will attain darjas – elevation in spiritual rank. However, were you to make zikr with the perspective shown above, according to the rules of zikr, according to the manner in which the sheikh prescribes it, then see what happens! Just see – did the buzurg not experience a state of rapture?

We were speaking about Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه . When he heard the couplet recited by the woman busy grinding, he went into a state of rapture. He gave the order to summon the reciters of samá'. Mind you, he had stopped listening to samá' after the muhtasib's visit. When the reciters came somebody said: "Hadhrat, they are here. But one thing we do not understand: What made you go into a hál?" Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه replied: "When the old woman recited, 'The leaf sinks and the stone floats,' I was reminded of the áyet of Súrah Qári'ah:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهُ ۙ فَهُوَ فِيْ عِيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ۭ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهُ ۙ فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ ۭ

Then, as for him whose scales are heavy (with good works), he will live a pleasant life. But as for him whose scales are light, he will have his home in Háwiyah [an extremely deep pit in hell].(S.101.6-9.)

"Whosoever's weight will be heavy, will float away into Jannat. But whosoever's weight will be light, will sink into hell. That is where my gaze fell!"

That was the reason for him going into a hál. Hadhrat, that Being that is entrenched in the heart, that Being comes to mind, no matter what statements others make! If ordinary folks like us were to read the books in which the tales of Laylah and Majnún appear, we will develop love in our hearts, a love that is carnal. Whereas, if such people like Sháh Hadhrat

’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه and others were to read these very same books their ishq-e-iláhí (passionate love for Alláh Ta’álá) increases.

To continue: The reciters having arrived, the samá’ commenced. The muhtasib, who was staying over in Gangoh, got wind of it. He rushed over to put a stop to it as he had done previously. However, this time the mood of Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه was different. The moment the muhtasib set his foot on the threshold he also went into a hál and trembling and panting, unable to control himself, he made his way to Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه with some difficulty. He said: “Hadhrat, make me bai’at.” “How can I?” Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه replied. “You are the muhtasib – your duty is to stop us. Last time you commanded us to stop, and we stopped.” The muhtasib said: “Hadhrat, the situation today is different. I make taubah. Please make me bai’at.” Sháh Hadhrat ’Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه made him bai’at.

There is a special moment for this, a specific time. Such as with Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه.

Tawajjuh – focusing of spiritual attention

Before relating this episode, I wish to make some precautionary remarks: Nowadays, the mashá’ikh have left off making tawajjuh. Conditions change and the strength and power that people of old had, is non-existent now.

Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه was making tawajjuh in the direction of his muríds who were sitting in front of him. It so happened that a dog passed by directly in front of Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه at that particular moment. The dog proceeded a short distance and sat down, head bowed down. One by one, all the dogs of the neighbourhood appeared and they all sat down in front of this dog, all with their heads bowed down. The dog sat there for a while in this manner, with head bowed down. The other dogs sat there in a similar manner. Thereafter, this dog got up and went away. The other dogs also got up and went away. The dogs had also gone into a hál!

The mental power of Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه , the force of his tawajjuh, had an effect on the dogs as well! There is a special moment, a specific time, when this happens.

To continue: The muhtasib became bai'at. This incident has been related in connection with Sháh Hadhrat 'Abdul-Quddus Gangohí رحمة الله عليه because he used to listen to a fair amount of samá' and the reason was that this was a remedy for the condition of "hiddate-jismání" that he suffered from. I had mentioned that his condition was such that he used to bath with ice-cold water in the mornings in the middle of winter. What sin did he commit?

Samá' and Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه

The other person who used to listen to a fair amount of samá' as well, was Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه. At the same time, however, he also laid down this law for his muríds: "If any of my muríds were to listen to samá', he will cease to be my muríd." This is to be found in his malfúzát. Whoever wishes to, can go and check it out for himself. It did happen. Once, somebody came to report to him: "Hadhrat! One of your muríds in such and such a place listens to samá'!" Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه replied: "I have told my friends" – muríds were referred to as yáron/doston (friends) – "that whosoever listens to samá' ceases to be my muríd. If he is listening to samá', then he is no longer my muríd." Yet, he himself used to listen. But he did not allow his muríds to listen. Nobody could say to him that he himself listens. No. This was inappropriate.

Are you listening carefully?

In his time, there was a buzurg by the name of Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. He was an álim and a qází (judge). Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه lived in the same period as Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه. He advised Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín sáhib: "Stop this act of bid'ah! What you are doing is not correct!"

Remember that Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه used to observe all the laws pertaining to samá'. There were no tablah, sárangí, and so forth, as I have already mentioned. So, technically, according to the Shirí'at laws, Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه was not involved in bid'ah.

Something else comes to mind. Let me interrupt to relate this. We had heard this from Hadhratwálá.

Dialogue with Sháh Abdur-Rahím Sáhib

Sháh Abdur-Rahím Sáhib was a great álim and a buzurg. He once visited the mazár (mausoleum) of Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه. Obviously, this incident took place long after Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه had passed away. A rúhání dialogue, a communication between the souls of the two, commenced:

Sháh Abdur-Rahím Sáhib: Janáb Sultánjí Sáhib, this practice of yours of listening to samá', what is it and where did you dig it up from? Hadhrat Sultánjí: Why? What evil was there in it?

Sháh Abdur-Rahím: What makes you feel that it was not sinful?

Hadhrat Sultánjí: Let me pose a question: What does the Hadíth Sharíf state with regard to poetry?

Bear in mind that both were great álims.

Sháh Abdur-Rahím:

حَسِيْنُهٗ حَسِيْنٌ وَ قَبِيْحُهٗ قَبِيْحٌ

For poetry that is good, it is good; and for that which is bad, it is evil

Hadhrat Sultánjí: What does the Hadíth Sharíf state with regard to husne-saut – a good voice?

Sháh Abdur-Rahím:

حَسِيْنُهٗ حَسِيْنٌ وَ قَبِيْحُهٗ قَبِيْحٌ

For a voice that is good, it is good; and for one which is bad, it is evil.

Hadhrat Sultánjí: Connecting the two, what do you deduce?

Sháh Abdur-Rahím: *Good poetry read with a good voice, is good; and bad poetry read with a bad voice, is bad.*

Hadhrat Sultánjí: Well, we did what was hasan. When did we do anything that was qabíh?

At this point in the conversation, a strange phenomenon occurred: a splendidly decorated sedan-chair suddenly appeared on the scene and sitting on it was Sháh Bahá'uddínرحمة الله عليه Naqshbandí.

In former times, it was the custom for the mashá'ikh to travel in these sedan-chairs.

Now, Sháh Bahá'uddín sáhib was a very well-known buzurg in the Naqshbandí silsilah, dating back quite some time. He had passed away a long time ago. In any case, the sedan-chair appeared on the scene and came

to rest near the mazár of Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه and Sháh Bahá'uddín sáhib رحمة الله عليه alighted from it.

Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه, who had been conversing with Sháh Abdur-Rahím Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, suddenly stopped and kept silent. After a short while Sháh Bahá'uddín sáhib رحمة الله عليه climbed back onto the sedan-chair and he, with the sedan-chair, vanished.

Sháh Abdur-Rahím Sáhib رحمة الله عليه commented to Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه: "Sultánjí! This was the occasion for you to have put forward your stand with regard to listening to samá', together with all your proofs!" Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه replied: "He is one of our elders and to have spoken like that in front of one of our elders is contrary to good manners. That is why I kept silent."

The reason for Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه saying this was that those in the Naqshbandí silsilah never listened to samá'!

Do you understand?

This episode has been mentioned incidentally. To continue where I had left off:

Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه had voiced his strong disapproval. When Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه would not accept Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه kept quiet. Time passed. A time came when Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه became ill. The illness became prolonged and his condition deteriorated. It became apparent to everybody in the city that Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه was not going to recover and that his death was imminent. He had taken a turn for the worst.

Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه came to know of it as well.

Listen carefully! Just see the qualities of our elders, how the seniors of that era behaved towards those who were their adversaries.

Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه came to know as well that Qází Sanámí Sáhib's رحمة الله عليه condition was deteriorating and had taken a turn for the worst. He promptly arrived at his home for iyádat (visiting a sick person). Who came? Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. Arriving at the house of Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه he knocked on the door. The laundí came out and enquired: "Who is it?" Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه replied: "I am Nizámuddín. I have come to visit Qází Sanámí Sahib." The laundí

went inside and informed Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه: "It is Sultánjí Sáhib, Hadhrat Nizámuddín sáhib. He has come for your iyádat."

Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه said: "Go and inform him that these are my final moments. At this crucial time when I am about to meet Haqq Ta'álá I have no wish to meet with such a bid'atí!"

[Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه paused for a while before continuing.]

"Feelings" – an important principle in sulúk

Another qissah comes to mind, so let me relate it: A certain buzurg arrived in a locality. In this town there lived another buzurg as well. This buzurg came to know that a certain buzurg had come to his town from outside. He thought to himself: "A buzurg has come – I should go and meet him," and he got up. A feeling then came into his heart: "Do not go." So he sat down again. Then he thought: "This is only a wehm – an unsubstantiated doubt – I am having. I should really go," and he stood up again. The feeling again came into his heart: "Don't go!" He sat down again. After a little while he thought to himself: "No, really, I should go and visit him." He got up. This feeling came again: "Don't go!" But this time he ignored it and started moving towards the door. He had hardly taken two steps when his foot slipped and he twisted his ankle!

This brings forth an important principle in Sulúk: If a person is a real, genuine muttaqí, abstinent (parezghár), zákir ahlulláh and he experiences a sudden feeling in his heart, then he should not act contrary to that feeling. Should he act contrary to that feeling, he will not be committing a sin as far as his ákhirat is concerned, but he will definitely suffer some worldly harm.

So, this buzurg, having ignored the feeling that came into his heart – "Don't go!" – suffered some harm: his ankle got sprained. Now he could not go.

One or two days later, a person from that locality came to visit this buzurg. This buzurg enquired from him: "Bháí, some buzurg had come to our town – is he still here or has he left?" This person replied: "Hadhrat, he has left already. However, he turned out to be a bid'atí!" This buzurg said: "Ofo! This is the reason why my ankle got sprained! I had intended

to go and visit him and this is what happened!"

To continue with Qází Sanámí Sáhib's رحمة الله عليه qissah:

Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه told the laundí to tell Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, who was waiting at the entrance for permission to enter: "Go and tell him that these are my final moments. I have no wish to meet with such a bid'atí!"

Do you understand?

The laundí went and relayed the message: "Hadhrat says that he has no wish to meet with such a bid'atí." What was Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib's رحمة الله عليه reply to this rebuke? Áháhá! It is worth listening to! It is worth understanding! Nowadays, many groups have arisen like a sudden storm, wayward in nature. People are getting enmeshed in their nets! Alláh Ta'álá has placed these thoughts into my heart and I am relaying these to you.

On hearing this rebuke, Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه replied: "Go and tell Hadhrat that I am not an ill-mannered lout that I would present myself in his presence still as a bid'atí, but I have come here having made taubah from those very acts of bid'ah!"

Do you see how the Great behave? Did he become obstinate? Did he start a fight? No! He was a true zákir! He was an ahlulláh in the true sense of the word! Listen further:

The message was conveyed to Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. Qázisáhib unwound the turban which he was wearing on his head and handed it to the laundí and said: "I am aware of the high stage that Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib has reached spiritually. He is not one that, stepping in here, his feet should touch the ground. Lay down this turban from the door to my bed and request him to enter, walking on my turban. That is his worth!"

Do you see? Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه knew his elevated status. The disagreement with him was a Shar'í issue. And the disagreement was on the basis of safeguarding the populace.

The laundí took the turban to the door and bent down to unroll it. Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه asked: "What is this?" The laundí replied: "It is Hadhrat's order: 'Lay down this turban from Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib's feet to my bed, so that Hadhrat Sultánjí Sáhib can enter walking with his shoes on my turban' ". Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه said: "How

can this be? Hadhrat's turban is worthy of being placed on my head!"

Do you see the ways of the elders? Is my voice reaching you or not?

Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه took the turban from the laundí's hands, placed it on his head and presented himself at Qází Sanámí Sáhib's رحمة الله عليه bedside and said: "Hadhrat, how can you do such a thing?" Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه said: "No. No. I know who you are, what your status is." Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه returned the turban.

The two conversed for a while, their voices a bit hushed. Qází Sanámí Sáhib's رحمة الله عليه voice became weaker, his breathing a bit heavy. He said: "Hadhrat, these are my last moments. Hadhrat, make du'á that my khátimah is with ímán." Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه made du'á: "May Alláh Ta'álá maintain your final moments with salámatí and ímán." He then said: "Hadhrat, permission to leave?" Qází Sanámí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه said: "Very well."

Hadhrat Sultánjí Nizámuddín Auliyá رحمة الله عليه wrote afterwards: "I had just reached the door and stepped out when, from inside, the sound of the household people crying, reached my ears, signifying that Hadhrat Qázisáhib had passed away!"

Conclusion

I cannot say why today these topics have cropped up, why they came forth from my lips. It surely is in the knowledge of Alláh Ta'álá. These are issues which are essential to recognise and essential to know and essential to come into one's realm of 'ilm: what are the ways others have introduced and how our elders have taken the utmost care to safeguard themselves, protect themselves from going contrary to the sunnat.

Do you understand?

It is almost time for namáz. This faqír, this humble servant, is about to leave. Maybe at some other time, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, Alláh Ta'álá granting the taufíq, I will make your khidmat. In the meantime, learn and memorise a lesson given by Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه. And what is that? Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه stressed the following:

اپنے مسلک کو چھوڑو مت

اور دوسرے مسلک کو چھیڑو مت

Do not forsake your school of thought;

And do not interfere with the school of thought of others!

Du'á

May Alláh Ta'álá grant us the taufíq to make amal on the sunnat – ittibá'-e-sunnat – in the correct meaning of the term, with tawádhu and taqwá.

آمِیْن – یَا رَبِّ الْعَالَمِیْنَ

Khudá háfiz.

BOOKLET NUMBER TEN

Shawwál 1418 – February 1998

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Alhamdulilláh! Through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our sheikh, this tenth booklet (not counting the "Special Issue") is now ready.

This tenth number is meant to be a "bonus" issue, in that the ambitious task has been undertaken of translating three consecutive majális that Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه held in Lahore, Pakistan, in October 1986. The occasion was the annual jalsah of the organisation "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen, Pakistan". It is appropriate, therefore, to note down a few comments concerning the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen":

Very briefly: When Hadhrat Mauláná Ashraf 'Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه saw the decline in the Muslim ummat, compounded with the onslaught from outside forces, he wrote two kitábs to remedy the situation. The one was "Hayaatul-Muslimeen" and the other was "Siyánatul-Muslimeen," wherein an all-comprehensive programme was laid down for the revival of the ummat. In order to give practical force to the programme the body "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen" was formed. This was approximately in the year 1930.

The object was to put into practice the teachings contained in the two kitábs – that is, that Islám be practised in its all-comprehensive form, taking into account 'aqá'id: 'ibádat, mu'ásharat, mu'ámulát and akhláq. Branches of the organisation were subsequently established in different areas, with the main centre, subsequent to Hadhrat Thánwí's رحمة الله عليه demise and after the formation of Pakistan, being established in Lahore by Hadhrat Thánwí's رحمة الله عليه senior khalífah-e-khás, Hadhrat Mauláná Sháh Hafiz Jalíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib رحمة الله عليه in 1953. Upon the latter's demise the reins were taken over by Hadhrat Mauláná Sayyid Najmul Hasan Sáhib Sharwání رحمة

الله عليه. Annually an ijtimá’ is held in Lahore, where those connected to the “Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen” gather and the aims of the organisation are propagated.

It is at one such ijtimá’ that our Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه spoke. The first majlis conducted by our Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه after the ’Asr namáz, is directed more towards those connected to the “Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen”. The theme is that of nisbat, which is then developed in the subsequent majális held on the following two days.

At the end of this booklet is a translation of a letter written by Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه on the subject of nisbat. This letter very nicely summarises and rounds off the subject.

May Alláh Ta’álá grant all of us, the readers, those who have assisted and the translator and all our families true and correct nisbat m’Alláh.
Dr.I.M.

[Here follows a translation of a series of majális held by Hadhrat Mauláná Muhammad Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه *on being invited to address those attending the annual ijtimá’ of the “Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen (Pakistan)” in Lahore. Dates: 16th 17th and 18th October 1986, corresponding with the 3rd, 4th and 5th Safar 1407.]*

NISBAT – AFFILIATION/ CONNECTION
THE FIRST MAJLIS

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

What can one say? Bayáns continue to be delivered. And here, there are limitless bayáns being delivered!

In any case, what I wish to state is that last year as well, this servant was invited to attend the annual ijtimá’ of the “Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen”. However, one may put it that the water and grain of this place was not in my taqdír then, or one may say that the length and severity of my illness were the causes for this servant’s non-attendance. Otherwise, it is obvious that whatever is specifically linked to one’s sheikh – the nisbat is to one’s

sheikh – and one is invited to it and there are no special hindrances, then not to attend, is not to value one's nisbat! And especially those individuals who have a more specific and special affiliation, a very special nisbat, they have no grounds for excusing themselves or allowing obstacles to present themselves.

Nisbat is a great thing.

And when one considers that the person to whom one is affiliated is a Sáhibe-Haqq – a person who is on Truth – and him being a Sáhibe-Haqq has already been established by various proofs, then the nisbat is taken into even greater consideration. One does not then search for excuses for not attending. To the contrary, one searches for excuses that will make it possible in whatever way for one to definitely attend.

This is applicable to each individual according to his 'aqídat in (faith and confidence) and ta'alluq with (affiliation) the Sáhibe-Haqq.

Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib and the beggar

A qissah comes to mind concerning an incident from which one may learn a great lesson:

This incident concerns Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib, the founder of Aligarh College. For some years now it is a fully fledged University.

It was a hot summer's day. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib was relaxing on a couch in his room. A companion of his, one of the nobility of Hyderabad Deccan, was Similarly, relaxing on a couch nearby. The nobility in those days used to cool themselves by having a screen of sweet-smelling grass suspended in the room while an attendant used to sprinkle water on it and fan them with large hand-fans. There were no electric fans or coolers in those days. These two were resting thus when Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib observed through the glass doors the arrival of a beggar outside. The beggar stopped at the well situated just outside and laid down his knapsack.

Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib commented to his companion: "This person is going to come here in the guise of a durwesh, but I will not give him even one paisah!"

As predicted, the beggar, having changed into the garb of a durwesh, came up to the door and knocked. His knock was ignored. But these beggars

tend to be daring and tenacious. The hint from inside had no effect and the knocking continued persistently. Finally, the attendant was told to open the door. The "durwesh" entered, made salám and sat down. However, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib, having seen that this was just an ordinary person who had merely changed into the garb of a durwesh, continued to ignore him.

The "durwesh," seeing the indifference, spoke sharply: "Do you not recognise who I am? I am that person who has had the honour of visiting such and such a person! My eyes have been blessed by gazing at his radiant núr-filled face!" On hearing this Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib immediately sat up. Asking his attendant to bring his cash-box, he took from it a generous sum, got up from his couch, went over to the "durwesh" and standing respectfully before him, handed over the money. "Huzúr! Kindly accept this gift!" The "durwesh" accepted the money and left.

The companion from Hyderabad commented drily: "Just now you were adamant that you would not give him a single paisah, but then you went and handed over to him a substantial amount!" Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib said: "Do you not realise what he said?" The companion said: "He merely said that he had met a certain person." "Do you know the person he said he had visited?" his companion said. "No. I don't." Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib said: "The person whose name he took, was my sheikh! When he took the name of my sheikh, saying that he had visited him, he was showing an affiliation (nisbat) to my sheikh. Heavens! Then how could I be so audacious as to ignore him and refuse his request?"

Let us stop to ponder! Those whom we consider to be dunyádár (worldly people), just see the qualities they have in them. Note that the "durwesh" was not his sheikh, but had merely claimed to have seen his sheikh. Only Alláh Ta'álá knows whether he had seen him or not. These people are very professional. He may have fished out this information from somebody, as to who Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib's sheikh was. But see, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib did not cross-examine him: "When did you see him? Where did you see him? What was his appearance like? Describe his features and complexion." No. He did not delve into all that.

His attitude was: "If I have no proof to the contrary, why should I consider

a Muslim person to be a liar?" Thus, he handed him the money and the beggar left.

To continue: Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khán Sáhib, still addressing his companion, said: "It is a good thing that he accepted what I had presented to him. If he had told me: 'Hand over the entire cash-box to me, I take a qasm on Alláh Ta'álá that, because of the nisbat, I would have picked up the entire cash-box and handed it over to him!"

Ponder! This is a so-called "dunyádár" individual, yet showing such qualities which should be seen in us who are considered to be "díndár" people.

So, if something has a nisbat with a person and that person is of the ahle-Haqq and one also has nisbat with that person, is it possible to look for excuses for being absent? Can this be proof of respect within his heart for that person?

Yes, if some special obstacle were to present itself, then with heartfelt grief – with utter grief – he will be absent. Otherwise, there is no reason for not being present and this applies more so to those who have a special connection (ta'alluq).

Moreover, when that particular cause that we are speaking about, has been structured by the said ahle-Haqq and the very foundations have been laid by him, then it is not only for the duration of his life time. It is for afterwards as well, even after he has passed away. Such individuals do not "die" (wafát páná), but they become "transposed" (muntaqil honá).

Intiqál honá – to be transposed: Hají Imdádulláh رحمة الله عليه and his sheikh

The reason why the term "intiqál" is used for a mu'min on his death is because he will now receive full and complete reward in the hereafter. He is now transposed from this world to another, where he will receive full and complete compensation for those amal which he had performed with complete sincerity, with the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá. Both terms – wafát and intiqál – are used to denote physical death. In appearance, the person appears to "die," but, in reality, the person remains alive. And from the graves of certain special individuals tremendous spiritual benefit is derived and abundant faiz is attained.

I am reminded of something related to us by Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه:

Our par-dádá pír Hadhrat Mianjí Núr Muhammad Sáhib رحمة الله عليه had become ill. The illness took a serious turn and did not appear to abate. So much so that he realised that he would not live long. Originally from a place called Jinjání, he had come to live in a place called Lohárí and he now yearned to return to his hometown. He called forth for a sedan-chair to be brought and he went to sit in it and set forth.

Incidentally, in that era [early 19th century] the 'ulemá would travel on horseback and the mashá'ikh travelled in these sedan-chairs. We are not speaking of present times.

In order to reach Jinjání he had to pass through Thana Bhawan. When passing through, Hadhrat Mianjí Núr Muhammad Sáhib رحمة الله عليه ordered the sedan-chair to be stopped outside the khánqáh and requested the chair-bearers to call Hajísáhib.

Who was Hajísáhib? This was none other than Hají Imdádulláh رحمة الله عليه, the sheikh of Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه. He had already acquired fame in his youth. Originally he had entered the Naqshbandí silsilah and had already been given khiláfat there. But he did not rest.

We, on the other hand, experience a few effects of zikr and we sit back completely satisfied and complacent. But Hajísáhib's thirst was not quenched. Even after having reached the stage of a khalífah, his search continued. One night, Hajísáhib had a dream in which he had made ziyárat of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, who had indicated to him to become bai'at to a certain person whose features were shown to Hajísáhib in the dream. That was all.

At that time there lived here in Jalálábád a great buzurg. He had the special honour of making ziyárat of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم in a state of wakefulness. Hajísáhib used to come to this buzurg to study the kitáb *"Hisne Hasín"*. This buzurg noticed Hajísáhib's restlessness and advised him: "Mianjí!"

In those days the pious and scholars were addressed as "mianjí" or "mulláhjí," but nowadays one cannot use these titles because people feel insulted.

"Mianjí! You appear still to be thirsty spiritually. There is a village called

Lohárí, nearby here. There is a buzurg there. Why do you not go and see him?"

Hajísáhib went to Lohárí. When he entered the khánqáh there and set eyes on Hadhrat Mianjí Núr Muhammad Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, with a sudden jolt he realised that this was the same buzurg shown to him in his dream by Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم! Hajísáhib became bai'at in the Chistiyah silsilah to Hadhrat Mianjí Núr Muhammad Sáhib رحمة الله عليه and progressed here as well to the stage where he was again given khiláfat.

To continue: Hadhrat Mianjí Núr Muhammad Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, being very ill, had stopped at the khánqáh in Thana Bhawan and had ordered the pálkí-bearers to summon Hajísáhib. Hajísáhib came out and peered into the pálkí through the curtains and saw his sheikh lying ill in it. Saláms were exchanged, musáfahah was made and Hadhrat Mianjí Núr Muhammad Sáhib رحمة الله عليه said: "Hajísáhib! My idea at this moment is that I should take more work from you." Remember that Hajísáhib had already been given the responsibilities of khiláfat from two silsilas. Hadhrat Mianjí Núr Muhammad Sáhib رحمة الله عليه repeated: "My heart desires that I should take more work from you. It appears as if my time is limited." Hearing this, tears came to the eyes of Hajísáhib, indeed as they should!

These august personalities do not shed tears at the thought of separation that death brings, but they weep with the grief that: "Tomorrow, should I be in need of my sheikh or some obstacles come across my path, to whom shall I turn to in order to solve my problems? My spiritual progress will come to a standstill!"

Seeing his tears Hadhrat Mianjí Núr Muhammad Sáhib رحمة الله عليه remarked – and this is the purpose of relating this episode: "Do not feel concerned. Do not distress yourself. A faqír does not die – he is merely transposed! I will not be around, but my grave will be there. You should frequent it. In-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, you will then still attain the same faiz as you have attained in my lifetime."

This is something to ponder over.

As I was saying: When a person has established something and laid down the foundations for it and structured it, then should not those who are connected to him, those who are his followers, direct their attention

at bringing about further progress and elevating it higher? This is what those who have ikhlás and sidq would desire! Or should they be doing the opposite – bringing about retrogression and destroying it? And this applies even more so to those who have an extra-special affiliation, like being the offspring.

Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه once spoke thus, concerning Mauláná Jalíl Ahmed Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, who was known as "Piyáre-mian" and who was my brother-in-law. "If there was a custom of doing it, I would have made Mauláná Jalíl Ahmed my adopted son."

This is something to ponder over. Take a lesson from it.

Mauláná Jalíl Ahmed Sáhib رحمة الله عليه left all his possessions in Hindustan and came to Pakistan, bringing with him the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen" and dedicated his whole life and wealth in propagating its ideals. Whatever he had he sacrificed, spending the remainder of his life in difficult circumstances.

Mauláná Ilyás رحمة الله عليه and the Tablígh Jamá'at

Take the situation of Mauláná Ilyás Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, who founded the Tablígh Jamá'at which has its markaz in Nizámuddín, Delhi. When he passed away, the Tablígh Movement did not come to an end, but it was fostered by his son Hadhrat Mauláná Yúsuf Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, who was also the son-in-law of Sheikhul-Hadíth Hadhrat Mauláná Zakariyyá Sáhib رحمة الله عليه and he propagated the movement further. He put his full effort into it and spread it even more. When Hadhrat Mauláná Yúsuf Sáhib رحمة الله عليه passed away, the reins were taken over by Hadhrat Mauláná Inámul-Hasan Sáhib, who was also the son-in-law of Hadhrat Zakariyyá Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. And he, too, fully exerted himself in this effort, causing the movement to grow and grow, with fadhle-iláhí and taufíqe-iláhí. Just observe the sincerity in them, the unity and muhabbat they had within themselves.

People from outlying areas come to the markaz in Nizámuddín, Delhi, in connection with the affairs of the Tablígh Movement. From time to time, some of them come to visit me in Jalálábád as well. Once, quite a big group of people came to meet me. A bit surprised at their number, I asked them what was happening? They explained that Hadhrat Mauláná Inámul-Hasan

Sáhib had gathered in Delhi people from different parts of Mysore and Madras in the south of India. Every six to 12 months, workers are called and instructed on how to go about the work of Tablígh. This was the purpose for their coming to Delhi from Mysore and Madras.

Methods of advertising

The point I wish to make is that there is no necessity for them to hand out handbills. You will have seen that they never ever give out handbills, because each individual is himself a "handbill"! Whenever an ijtimá' is taking place you will not find any printed notices and handbills publicising the event, but jamá'ats will go out to different areas, localities and towns. They will then make ghast, inviting towards the ijtimá' and taking out with them newcomers in their thousands to attend the ijtimá'!

Whereas at our ijtimá's, those of the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen," handbills and notices have to be printed and distributed and even then only a handful of people present themselves.

Collection of funds

In the same way, they do not have to go around collecting funds, because they are a "fund" in themselves! They have many well-to-do people, millionaires and billionaires, who are jamá'at workers. They themselves make their funds available on a continuous basis. It is not necessary for anybody to tell them to donate funds. They have dedicated themselves with such sincerity that they have worn themselves out, body, soul and wealth, in this effort.

Because of this nisbat with Hadhrat Mauláná Ilyás Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, with what great compassion and courage and painstaking effort, did Hadhrat Mauláná Yúsuf Sáhib رحمة الله عليه and, now, Hadhrat Mauláná Inámul-Hasan Sáhib, steer the movement ahead.

These points I have brought up to underline that my sheikh, Hadhrat Mauláná Ashraf 'Alí Sáhib رحمة الله عليه was the one to establish "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen". Its nisbat is towards him. So, those who have a ta'alluq and have ikhlás and sidq, have no grounds for excuses.

It is necessary to keep one's hearts clean at all times, which is termed

"husne-zin" (to harbour good thoughts and not to entertain evil suspicions). This work is not to be kept dependent on the presence or absence of any individual, or on the founder being alive or not.

Husne-zin (nék-gumání) and sú-e-zin (bid-gumání)

Husne-zin is a great quality, whereas the opposite – sú-e-zin – is a very vile act. In the Court of Haqq Ta'álá, you will not be called to account on having had husne-zin with regard to a certain person, but you will definitely be taken to task on why you had sú-e-zin with regard to a certain person. Why did you have bid-gumání towards a certain person – why did you harbour evil thoughts about him? You will not be questioned as to why you thought well of him. Have nék-gumán with regard to every mu'min.

ظَنُّوْا بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ خَيْراً

Have nek-gumán with regard to every mu'min.

إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

Verily, some suspicion is a sin. (S.49.12.)

Until and unless there is a shar'í basis, bid-gumání is a sin. There has to be a proper shar'í investigation and shar'í evidence or the person himself either acknowledges or refutes the allegations. Bid-ghumání and sú-e-zin creates fasád (mischief/ trouble/ dissension) and causes fitnah to spread.

Hadhrat 'Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه making salám to Hadhrat Abúbakr رضی الله تعالی عنه first

An incident comes to mind:

Once, Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه was walking along in a certain direction. Approaching him from the opposite direction was Hadhrat 'Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه. When they were fairly close, Hadhrat 'Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه made salám to Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه, who replied to the salám. It so happened that a sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه was passing by and took note of this meeting between the two, where Hadhrat 'Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه made salám first. He thought to himself. "What transpired is contrary to the normal practice of Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه. It was always the habit of

Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه, whenever he met Hadhrat 'Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه, to greet first. Whereas, on this occasion, he did not initiate the salám, but Hadhrat 'Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه made salám first. Is there not, perhaps, some discord between the two, some change in their hearts, some ill-feelings, some unpleasantness?"

The sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه went straight to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and reported the incident to him: "I always used to see Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه make salám to Hadhrat 'Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه first. Today, the opposite happened." Whenever anything happens contrary to normal practice, it is only natural that suspicions are aroused.

Another incident springs to mind, one that Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله علیه, related to us. Let me mention this incident before continuing:

One buzurg used to be in the habit of visiting another buzurg.

You will find birds of a kind, together they will fly along,
Dove with a dove, falcon with a falcon.

One day this buzurg did not come visit him as was his normal routine. The thought came to the other buzurg that there must be some valid reason for him not coming. The following day also he did not come visit him and on the third day as well. The doubts now assailed him. "I must have done something wrong for him not to visit me, contrary to his normal habit."

He proceeded to the house of the buzurg and knocked on the door. The first buzurg answered the knock, saláms were exchanged, musáfahah was made and he asked. "Why have you taken the trouble to come?" "Huzúr!" The second buzurg replied. "You used to visit me daily. Three days have passed and you have not visited me. The thought came to me that perhaps the reason is that I may have been rude or insulting to you, that I may perhaps have said or did something to upset you." The first buzurg said: "If that were the case, the Hadíth Sharíf states that if there is some discord with one's friend during any discussion, clear it up there and then, in that very majlis. One should not leave it for some other time. So, if there was anything you said or did along these lines, I would have brought it up there and then and clarified the matter. Rest assured that I have no complaints against you."

Much relieved, the second buzurg asked: "Then, why did you not come?"

The first buzurg replied. "I had developed an abscess and that is why I could not come." The second buzurg asked: "Where is the abscess?" This time the first buzurg gave no reply. He remained silent.

There are two possible reasons for him to have kept silent. One is due to his natural disposition, his temperament; the other is due to a shar'í reason.

Firstly, the disposition of some individuals is that of being naturally very modest and shy and to mention certain anatomical parts of the body is difficult. The person feels extremely shy to mention these.

Secondly, the shar'í aspect is as follows: Seeing that the second buzurg now knew that the reason the first buzurg could not visit him was that he had an abscess, which caused him great pain and difficulty in walking, then the question as to where the abscess was situated, was an irrelevant and useless question, what is termed lá-yání.

Shun what is useless and futile – lá-yání

Ayyuhat-tulláb! Ponder a bit! What is the relevant Hadíth Sharíf?

مِنْ حُسْنِ اِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِتَرْكُهٗ مَا لَايَعْنِيْهِ

Of the beauty of a person's Islám is that he shuns what is useless/ futile.

These were the súfíyá-muhaqqiqín who acted on the Hadíth Sharíf and áyát of the Qur'án Sharíf! This is that Tasawwuf, that Sulúk, which is an extremely exquisite section of the sacred Sharí'ah! This Tasawwuf, this Sulúk is not a category apart from the Sharí'ah. Nay! It is very much a part of it and a very delicate and extremely exquisite part, which Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه, used to express as follows:

"Do you know what Sulúk is? This Sulúk is a rúh. To which rúh can one liken it to? The rúh of the malá'ikah!" The rúh is an extremely delicate and exquisite entity, even more so of such a delicate creation as the malá'ikah.

To continue: The first buzurg had kept silent. He had not replied because the second buzurg had asked a question that was irrelevant (lá-yání). Seeing that he now knew why the first buzurg had not visited him why

ask: “Where did you have the abscess?” When the object had been achieved why ask further? This question was superfluous – it was contrary to the teaching of:

مِنْ حُسْنِ اِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِتَرْكُهٗ مَا لَايَعْنِيْه.

The second buzurg also sensed that his question was superfluous. He went back home and on his return he fell prostrate in sajdah, lamenting and beseeching forgiveness in that he had been involved in lá-yání!

These are the effects of Sulúk! These are the results of zikr and taqwá, combined with Sulúk! This tongue that we possess has not been given for lá-yání. Haqq Ta’álá has created the tongue for His zikr and the heart has been created for His yád (remembrance).

It comes in the Hadíth Sharíf that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has stated that the tongue should be zákir (making zikr), that the heart should be shákir (making shukr) and the body should be sábir (making sabr). This tongue has been created for the zikr of Alláh Ta’álá, so why is there lá-yání kalám (useless and futile speech)? And the heart is for the yád of Alláh Ta’álá.

Just ponder: Alláh Ta’álá is One. There is only one tongue and the heart is single. Other parts of the body come in pairs: two hands, two feet, two eyes, two ears, two kidneys, and so forth. So that One Alláh Ta’álá has created one tongue for His zikr and one heart for His remembrance! A tongue not making zikr, can it be called a tongue? That heart not in yád, can it be called a heart?

ū Ĭħ į× ūģ òß ū Ĭħ ĝé ĝé ĩĭ

That heart is no heart in which You are not present!

The zikr of Alláh Ta’álá is demanded from us all the time, whereas the five daily namáz are for set and limited times.

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلٰوةَ فَاذْكُرُوااللهَ قِيٰمًا وَّقُعُوْدًا وَّعَلٰى جُنُوْبِكُمْ ۚ

When you have performed your salát, remember Alláh standing, sitting and reclining. (S.4.103.)

Alláh Ta’álá is addressing us, as if to say. “When you have completed performing your namáz do not imagine that you have fulfilled all My rights on you. Nay! Nay! That namáz was for a limited period. Whereas, while

standing or while sitting or while lying on your sides, you should still be involved in My zikr!"

Zikr lisání and zikr qalbí and the aspect of riyá

Zikr has two locations – there are two sites in the body where zikr is made. One is the tongue and the other is the heart. Making zikr with the tongue is called zikr lisání and zikr made in the heart is called zikr qalbí. With zikr lisání there should be zikr qalbí and with zikr qalbí there should be zikr lisání – this is the ideal, that there should be zikr taking place in both places simultaneously. This is the comprehensive form of zikr. Otherwise, at times, one is deceived into thinking that even though one is not making zikr lisání one is involved in zikr qalbí, whereas the heart is devoid of zikr – the heart is not zákir. The heart is empty! In contrast, zikr lisání is a conscious act and one cannot be deceived. That is why some individuals carry a tasbíh in their hands. By doing so the thought should never enter one's mind that this is riyá – doing something for show.

Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه used to hold a tasbíh in his hand. Somebody enquired: "Hadhrat! You have already reached a very lofty status spiritually, in that the yád of Alláh Ta'álá is all the time in your heart and you are making zikr all the time. So, what need is there for the tasbíh?" Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه replied: "This tasbíh in my hand is my benefactor. It was the initial means and cause for our gaining that stage of being in the remembrance of Alláh Ta'álá. So, should I now be ungrateful and discard it?"

Take note: Those asbáb (procedures/ causes) that make us neglectful of the yád of Záte-Bárí Ta'álá, they are worthy of being discarded. Whereas those asbáb that draw us closer to the zikr of Záte-Bárí Ta'álá, we have to hold firmly on to.

To continue with the topic of "husne-zin": I had related that Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضى الله تعالى عنه had not initiated the salám on meeting Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه and the sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه who had witnessed this had gone to relate the incident to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, fearing that perhaps there was some discord between the two. "Today Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضى الله تعالى عنه did not make salám first, but Hadhrat 'Alí رضى الله تعالى عنه had to make

salám first. Huzúr صلی الله علیه وسلم, would you not investigate?"

Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه was summoned. Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم asked: "Abúbakr, did any incident take place today between you and 'Alí?" "Yes," replied Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه. "'Alí was approaching as I was proceeding along. As we neared one another, he made salám and I replied. I did not make salám first." Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم asked: "And what was your habit previous to this?"

Take note that Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم did not act merely on the statement of the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه. No judgement was made, but the matter was investigated first.

Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه replied: "Previously it was my habit to make salám to 'Alí first." "Then why did you act contrary to your habit today?" asked Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. Pay attention now!

Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه replied: "For this reason that, whenever I used to initiate the salám, I used to notice that the showering of anwár-e-iláhí (spiritual radiance from Alláh Ta'álá) was greater on me and less on 'Alí. Today I adopted ithár so that the anwár of Záte-Bárí Ta'álá should shower more on my brother 'Alí and less on me!"

What was revealed after investigation? Whereas what were the assumptions prior to this? After investigation, the true picture was revealed that there were no differences, no discord between the two. Investigation revealed an amazing aspect!

Thawáb of initiating salám is greater

Students may raise a query here: To make salám is sunnat. To reply is wájib. The reward of a wájib act is more and that of a sunnat act is less. However, from the above incident it is apparent that initiating the salám, which is sunnat, drew greater anwár-e-iláhí and Therefore, greater thawáb, whereas replying to the salám, which is wájib, drew lesser anwár-e-iláhí and, therefore, lesser thawáb.

This is the direction in which a student's mind will race, as it should. That is why a Fársí poet said some quatrains the meaning of which is:

That student who sits in front of his ustád without asking any "whys?" and "wherefores?" and that muríd who sits in front of his sheikh full of

"whys?" and "wherefores?"– both of them should go and stay in the jungle! They have no need to reside among humans!

It is part of the student's work and study to do academic research. Whereas the work of the muríd is to take the treatment that is prescribed to him.

As I was saying, the student may raise a query as to the apparent contradiction in the thawáb attached to the salám.

The answer to this query is that the thawáb is based on the mujáhadah. Initiating the salám is not an act that everybody has the courage for! Only that person is able to do so who has real, genuine humility in his tabiyet, genuine lowliness, a nafs that is subjugated (kasre-nafs). Initiating the salám is a manifestation of one's humbleness, whereas in replying there is a type of boasting: "I am being greeted!" This is especially so when somebody important makes salám to a lesser person, then the latter's ego is even more inflated and he goes around saying: "Today such and such a person greeted me!" Thereby trying to impress on others his own rank.

So, in replying to a salám there is a type of boast, whereas in initiating the salám there is humility. And thawáb and qurbe-Iláhí is based on humility. Alláh Ta'álá loves humbleness, very much so!

All this is an elucidation of sú-e-zin and husne-zin and the importance of first investigating before jumping to conclusions.

We were speaking about nisbat that this is a great entity. In whichever direction one has nisbat, one places importance to it to the degree of that connection (ta'alluq) – one attaches importance to it and one takes the necessary care and consideration to preserve and propagate it. Yes, if on some rare occasion, by a process of deduction, some contrary thought comes into one's mind, that is a different matter.

However, even then if somebody places a reasonable argument in front of one to dispel this notion and one has no actual proof to reject this argument – and there is no obstinacy in oneself and one is not proud or conceited – then one should accept the argument.

Nisbat and Hadhrat Abúbakr رضی الله تعالی عنه

Huzúre-akram صلی الله علیه وسلم had passed away. However, during his blessed lifetime, shortly before his demise, he had handed the standard – the flag

taken by the commander when proceeding for jihád – to Hadhrat Usámá رضی الله تعالی عنه. He was instructed to proceed forth. Hadhrat Usámá رضی الله تعالی عنه left. Shortly thereafter, Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم passed away. There was consternation and panic among the Muslims. Some tribes even became apostate. Some refused to pay zakát.

Over here the Muhájirín and Ansár were having mashwarah (consultations) as to who should succeed to take over the role of head of state. Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم, besides being a nabí, was also a king, an amír, the head of a state. So, it was necessary to have somebody to take over the reins so that the administration and the application of the laws could be kept intact.

Hadhrat 'Umar رضی الله تعالی عنه saw that there was much vacillation and uncertainty and that this was causing an undue delay. He thought to himself: "Who can be more worthy and deserving than Abúbakr Siddíq?" He thus took the initiative and took bai'at at the hands of Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه. On seeing this, others also starting taking bai'at at the hands of Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه and shortly there was a general consensus (ijmá) of the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم on the khiláfat of Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه.

Now, on the one hand, there were those who refused to pay zakát and they had to be brought under control. On the other hand, the army under Hadhrat Usámá رضی الله تعالی عنه was ready for jihád and the Muslim forces in Madínah appeared depleted. Hadhrat 'Umar رضی الله تعالی عنه advised Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه: "Wait a while, make sabr. Do not, as yet, send any forces against those who refuse to pay zakát. However, if you insist on doing so, recall the force sent under Usámá, for they are still on their way and have not reached the position they were posted to."

Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه retorted: "O 'Umar! What has happened to you? In the Age of Jahálat you were very stern and now you have changed to become very soft! Usámá was given the standard by Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم and dispatched. Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم himself handed the standard to Usámá. Its nisbat is with Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. Are you asking me to separate it? That will never happen! If all of you decline to support me, then I will proceed all by myself!" Hadhrat 'Umar رضی الله تعالی عنه commented afterwards: "It was then that light dawned on me!"

Do you understand? We are speaking of nisbat.

Nisbat and the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم

Furthermore: It was that period after the demise of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. His mission of dáwah to ímán was completed. This responsibility now rested on the shoulders of the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم. An insight into their qualities is the following:

During the lifetime of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم there were a group of munáfiqín in the community. Wahí used to come to Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم on who they were. A scribe was entrusted with the task of writing down their names, but this was in strict confidence. Among the sincere (mukhlis) sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم there were some who feared: "Are our names not included among them?" They would thus approach the scribe and pose this very question to him!

But coming back to the point: That which Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم had established – Haqq and Tauhíd – to what extent was it not propagated? The responsibility was placed on the shoulders of the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم. How much toil and effort did they not put into it? How much did they not train themselves and trained others as well? How much firmness and steadfastness did they not display? How much strength and force did they not exert? How committed were they not in their obedience? Note that proof of muhabbat is through obedience (ittibá'yet.) Proof of muhabbat is not through lip-service. And the degree of obedience will be proof of the proportionate degree of muhabbat. A mere claim of muhabbat is not sufficient proof, for example, as was seen with the munáfiqín and their lip-service to Islám. The mukhlis – sincere – sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم were different.

It is well known that there were approximately 120 thousand Ambiyá علیهم السلام that were sent by Alláh Ta'álá. The approximate number of sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم that Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم left behind were also in the region of 120 thousand. Taking note of the Hadíth Sharíf:

عُلَمَآءُ اُمَّتِيْ كَاَنْبِيَآءِ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآئِيْلَ

The 'ulemá of my ummat are like the Ambiyá of the Baní-Isrá'íl.

120 thousand Ambiyá came before Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم; and there were 120 thousand sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم after him. It is as if each sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه stood for a Nabí علیه السلام of the Baní-Isrá'íl.

So, after the demise of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم maintained and established that nisbat, which will remain till the day of Qiyámat. From this one should understand that there are two factors to take into account: One is that personality towards whom there is nisbat; the other is that particular item that has been established by the personality in question. The continuation of what has been established is not dependent on the continued existence of the personality. Even though that personality ceases to exist, what he has established will continue to flourish. The reason is that the nisbat was to such an exalted personality, that the muhabbat for that person motivated those who were connected to him into maintaining and further propagating what had been established. It is not a situation that, as long as the personality is there that those who are connected to him, maintain it and the moment he is not there, they forget about it.

Just see! Whatever Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم had presented as objectives, the sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم clutched these to their breasts and, not only during the lifetime of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم, but even after his demise, they maintained these and propagated these further, as we saw Hadhrat Abúbakr Siddíq رضی الله تعالی عنه doing. To have maintained the foundations laid by Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم only during his lifetime and not bother after his demise would have been merely showing one's face. This would not have been ikhlás.

Nisbat! Here understand as well that there are two words which are very similar. One is nisbat (affiliation) and the other is nasab (family lineage). The amount of concern and effort a son puts into an item established by his father – the care and concern that he has that it should not be spoiled and that it should progress further – no one else will have. In the same way, nay, even more so, this applies to that person who has attained a bátiní nisbat! At times, this nisbat is greater than nasab – the favourable and promising condition is this.

As I had said, the affiliation of the “Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen” is to my sheikh, Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí (nawwaral-Alláhu-marqadahú). The foundation was laid by him and brought into existence by him. Therefore, there can be no excuses for not attending, unless some special insurmountable obstacles present themselves. However, one should not look for excuses for not attending.

Some say it was four years since my previous visit here (to Pakistan) – I tend to think that it was three years back, but others insist it was four years ago and perhaps it was so. In any case, I was quite ill while I was here and I left while still in that condition and even afterwards I remained ill; and the illness became aggravated, so much so that there was no hope of my surviving. There was no hope that I would remain alive. But then Alláh Ta’álá blessed me with more years of living, as if to say that I am being given an opportunity to compensate for any of my shortcomings of the past and if I have any expectations for the future, I should continuously make du’á for taufíq for these.

At that time I was extremely ill. Even now I am exceptionally weak, to that extent that it is difficult for me to walk without support. One may say that it is due to good nutrition or some other external factors that I have had the strength to be able to walk. Then, also, some have honoured me by extending an invitation time and again for me to attend and thus to see to their needs; and also the encouragement and support of the individuals back home are also factors – in any case, whatever the factors, by the taufíq of Alláh Ta’álá, I am here, despite my weakness.

This follows on what I had stated previously: Never at any time, or on any occasion, with regard to any person whomsoever, should one bring any bid-gumání into one’s heart. How is it that such and such a person, who has some ta’alluq and he is not here? That he, more so than others, should have come and participated! There could arise some valid reasons for him not attending. So, nék-gumán is compulsory and it is necessary that one should abstain from bid-gumání. Alláh Ta’álá will not put the question: “Why did you have nék-gumání with regard to a certain individual?” But the question will be asked. “Why did you have bid-gumání with regard to a certain individual?”

May Alláh Ta'álá give us and all mu'minín, the taufíq to keep our hearts clean and pure towards other mu'minín!

Reasons for disunity

These are the factors that are the root causes of all disunity. This has been mentioned in the Qur'án Sharíf that as long as these items keep on appearing in practice, to create unity is impossible, a daydream. If you so wish you may deliver lectures on the topic of unity; you can discuss unity ad infinitum in the newspapers and in essays; you may hold innumerable marches and processions for unity;, but unity will never be achieved by these lectures, discussions, essays and marches as long as the habits and roots of disunity are still present within individuals. These are illnesses within ourselves.

Have we not been told the following?

لَا تَحَاسَدُوْا – *Do not have hasad (jealousy).*

لَا تَبَاغَضُوْا – *Do not have bugz (hatred).*

لَا تَنَافَرُوْا – *Do not have nafrat (repulsion.)*

لَا تَنَابَزُوْا بِالْاَ لْقَابِ – Do not defame one another.

وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا – *Do not make ghíbat i.e. do not backbite.one another.*

(Ahádíth & S.49.11-12.)

These are illnesses within us. Within us we have kínah (malice), we have hasad (jealousy), we have bugz (hatred), we have the tendency to call one another by despicable names and we make ghíbat (backbite). As long as these qualities are kept within us there is no question of creating unity. Yes, should we vehemently oppose these qualities, unity will be seen.

As far as it is possible, as much as one can, one should keep one's heart completely clear and clean as far as our fellow mu'mins are concerned. It comes in the Hadíth Sharíf that when a person with even the slightest amount of kínah within his heart presents himself at the door of Jannat, he will be stopped. No doubt he is a Jannatí – he has permission to enter Jannat. But anybody with kínah within himself will not be allowed to enter Jannat. He will be ordered: "Halt!" While he is thus kept waiting, other

Jannatís will be seen to be entering Jannat. Záte-Bárí Ta'álá greatly desires that this person should also enter Jannat. However, there is within him a fragment of filth, of evil. Haqq Ta'álá will say: "Jannat is not a place in which to argue and fight. It is a place to stay with muhabbat." He will be told to stand up and Záte-Bárí Ta'álá will Himself remove the kínah from his chest. Only now will the order be given: "Go! Enter!"

Wisdom behind Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم not having sons

It is nearly time for the azán. At this moment this thought has come to mind: This ijtimá' is that of the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen," whose founder was our sheikh, Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله علیه. Efforts should be made to promote it and cause it to progress and expand more. There is no filial succession. That is: there are no children of our sheikh who could take over. And it has happened for the best that Hadhratwálá had no son. Remember that Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم had sons and daughters, but the male offspring passed away. This happened for the best. Note that other Ambiyá علیهم السلام who had existed previously had sons who were Ambiyá and grandsons and progeny who were Ambiyá as well.

Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم had sons, but they were not allowed to survive by Alláh Ta'álá. If they had survived there were two possibilities: either they would have been Ambiyá or they would not have been Ambiyá.

If they were not made Ambiyá and the progeny of other Ambiyá were made Ambiyá... "How could that be that the male progeny of My Habíb صلی الله علیه وسلم then would not be Ambiyá?"

Another point to ponder over: The mas'alah of khatme-nabúwat (finality of prophethood) becomes easy to understand from here also. Záte-Bárí Ta'álá had no intention to continue the chain of prophethood. This is very perceivable and easy to comprehend. Alláh Ta'álá is virtually stating: "My Habíb صلی الله علیه وسلم should have a son and he lives to adulthood and he is not made a nabí?" It would not be possible that with such an exceptional bond existing, where Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم is the most honoured prophet and the Habíb of Alláh Ta'álá, but his son, were he to survive, not be made a nabí.

Do you understand this point? The issue is quite clear and easy, that Alláh

Ta'álá intended to terminate the chain of nabúwat and thus did not allow any male children to survive.

Speaking about Hadhratwálá: if he had children, one does not know how they would have turned out to be. And how lofty was not the stature of Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه! They may well have been the cause of grief to him. So, it happened for the best that he had no children.

Marrying a second wife not advocated

Similarly, as I have often stated, it was a good thing that Hadhratwálá married a second wife. By doing this he has left a lesson for us, that we should not be audacious enough to marry a second wife! The reason? The reason being that we would never be able to treat both wives as fairly and justly as we saw Hadhratwálá treat his two wives. This road has been closed for all of us.

I had stated that nisbat is a great thing. We should pay greater and even greater attention to that organisation that Hadhratwálá had brought into existence and had laid the foundations of.

It is time for the Maghrib azán. If Alláh Ta'álá keeps us alive, then, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, I will speak again some other time. Make du'á that Alláh Ta'álá grants us the taufíq to safeguard our nisbat and fulfil its haqq. May He grant us ímáne kámil and the taufíq to perform amalus-sáleh. May He grant us firmness and constancy in these and bless our last moments on these.

وَصَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالٰى عَلٰى خَيْرِ خَلْقِهٖ مُحَمَّدٍوَّاٰلِهٖ وَاَصْحَابِهٖ اَجْمَعِيْنَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ
اٰمِيْن يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ بِحُرْمَةِ سَيِّدِالْمُرْسَلِيْنَ

THE SECOND MAJLIS

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

[The second majlis took place on the following day, Sunday, 4 Safar.]

بَعْدَالْحَمْدِ وَالصَّلٰوة

Yesterday, a few aspects concerning nisbat were discussed. Nisbat has a special effect. Some episodes were also related in this regard.

The meaning of nisbat is "ta'alluq" – "to have a connection with." It implies having ta'alluq from both sides. A one-sided connection cannot be termed ta'alluq whatsoever! This one-sided connection is merely a deception, making only oneself happy! A correct ta'alluq which is produced from both sides is termed nisbat.

Effects of nisbat

One finds different types of ta'alluq: the husbands with the wife; the wife's with the husband; the father's with the children, the children's with the father; the master's with his slave; the slave's with his master; and so forth. Each ta'alluq is of a different nature: the slave's ta'alluq with his master will be of a different nature and the master's ta'alluq with the slave will be of a different nature; the children's ta'alluq with the father will be of a different nature and the father's ta'alluq with the children will be of a different nature; and so forth. However, the ta'alluq will be from both sides and the extent to which there is ta'alluq, the degree to which there is nisbat, to that extent there will be a strength and force within oneself.

Take another situation: Some professional ranks are of a very insignificant nature. For example, a simple orderly (choprásí) in a government department has no rank or status – it is merely a position. The policeman (chokidár) has also a position and so has the Governor (Collector-sáhib), but there are vast differences in their ranks. However, each one is also part of the Royal services and the orderly and policeman consider themselves to be part of the same group as the Governor who is held in high esteem. So, the policeman will sense within himself a special strength and force in that he is part of the Royal establishment. Even though he may be wearing a mere policeman's uniform, but the uniform will identify him with the Royal establishment. If anybody were to interfere with him while he is still in

his official uniform, this person will be guilty of an offence. However, if he is not in his official uniform, but is wearing ordinary civilian clothes and anybody now interferes with him, that person will not be considered to have committed a criminal offence. The reason is that it is accepted that among people there are bound to be squabbles and these are not worthy of taking note of.

Uniforms are distinctive to various ranks

Every rank has its own distinctive uniform. If a person has one rank and he dons the uniform of a person of another rank, then he will be considered to have committed an offence.

For example, the army has a uniform and the police force also has a uniform. In both forces there exists the rank of a captain. Say, the captain in the police force were to don the uniform of a captain in the armed forces and it so happens that he is then summoned by his superior, the Inspector-General. He then goes to his superior in this uniform of the armed forces. His superior will have cause for amazement when he sees him thus. "I sent for a captain from the police force. Why has a captain from the armed forces come?" The captain will be interrogated and when his wilful change of uniform becomes known he will be charged for having committed an offence. He will not be able to say in his defence: "This uniform is of the Royal services and so is that other one." There are distinctive differences between the two. His having committed an offence will be confirmed and he will also be reprimanded: "Are you trying to interfere with the laws and regulations? How is one to recognise that you are a captain in the police force?"

So, in whichever direction one has one's nisbat and ta'alluq, that connection and affiliation has also to show itself. By showing itself one will be able to recognise the type of ta'alluq the person has. This nisbat may sometimes be weak; sometimes it may be strong; and sometimes very strong. Sometimes it is at an intermediate level and sometimes it is at a very elevated level. And who is it who does not know that in every field the objective is to attain the highest level?

So, from this aspect, taking nisbat into consideration, when a person

has stated with a sincere heart (tasdíqe-qalbí) as well as verbally (iqráre-lisání):

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ مُحَمَّدٌرَّسُوْلُ اللهِ

There is none worthy of worship except Alláh and that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم *is the Rasúl of Alláh.*

Then he has revealed that ta'alluq with a statement uttered previously. That is, when he was in the Álime-Barzakh and he was asked:

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ۖ قَالُوْا بَلٰى ۚ

"Am I not your Rabb?" [He (and others) then responded:] *"Verily!"*

By this exclamation he has acknowledged Rabúbiyet and disclosed Rabúbiyet. Just see, Haqq Ta'álá had asked: "Am I not your Rabb?" and not. "Am I not your Deity?" By using the term "Rabb" Haqq Ta'álá has clearly indicated His complete and absolute ta'alluq with His bandah on the basis of being his Creator. The term "Rabb" means" to create and sustain". So, by having asked: "Am I not your Rabb?" and our voices having rung out: "Verily! (You are definitely our Rabb!)" Haqq Ta'álá had obtained our acknowledgment and acceptance of His attribute of Takwín – of being our Creator and Sustainer.

So, now, after having come into this dunyá, the manifestation of that attestation from the aspect of Tashrí (Sharí'at) is in the form of the attestation of "Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh"

We are being explicitly shown: "Takwín is in My control, takwín is with Me, and takwín is aligned to Me, so, too, Tashrí is fully and completely aligned to Me!" Takwín is to be found in the answer of "Qálú balá" in response to "Alastu-Birabbikum" and Tashrí is to be found in "Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh"

We have been made responsible for the full and complete Tashrí

In this way, we have been made responsible for the full and complete Tashrí. Now understand what Tashrí means: Tashrí implies abdiyet (servitude) and ma'búdiyet (bondage). That is, from the side of the servant the acknowledgment and acceptance of his abdiyet and the ma'búdiyet to the

Creator. This is at the level of attestation of Tashrí and Divinity as contained in the Kalimah-Tayyibah. However, just staying at this level shows a very weak nisbat. This is a very weak ta'alluq. This is not a strong connection. It is merely a basic or primary ta'alluq. Another name for it is Taqwá-Tauhídí, which means that by this declaration and attestation one has left off shierk and kufr and one has accepted tauhíd. The wájib right that Alláh Ta'álá has on one from the aspect of Takwín (Alláh being the Creator) one has fulfilled at the basic level of Tashrí. This Alláh Ta'álá has mentioned in His Kaláme-Pák:

يَاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَخُوْنُوْا اللهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ وَتَخُوْنُوْٓا أَمٰنٰتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

O you who believe! Do not betray [fall short in fulfilling the rights of] Alláh and His Rasúl (S.8.27.)

Ponder a bit! Alláh Ta'álá is addressing us and saying: "You have left off kufr and shierk and have accepted ímán. (That is, accepted tauhíd, together with the attributes [sifát] of Alláh Ta'álá). This is one right that has been fulfilled. You now have a responsibility".

So, the meaning of the verse would be as follows: "O you who believe! Do not fall short in fulfilling the rights of Alláh Ta'álá and His Rasúl صلى الله عليه وسلم and let there, also, not be shortcomings in those items that are in your custody." That is, there must be no misappropriation in trusts and securities.

So, having abstained from shierk and kufr, having shed these, you have accepted Haqq – i.e. tauhíd. This has laid the foundation of taqwá. The foundation of taqwá is leaving off shierk and kufr. However, this is a weak nisbat, a feeble nisbat. It is now necessary for it to gain some strength and force. Notwithstanding the fact that this nisbat is weak, yet at its level it is also a stage of wiláyet (being a walí of Alláh Ta'álá), as Alláh Ta'álá states:

اَللهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۙ

Alláh is the Friend of those who believe. (S2.257.)

That is, those who have brought only ímán, they have also been called

"walí". However, this level of wiláyet is a weak one. It is obvious that one's objective is to attain the strongest or highest levels. Hence, those huqúq which come after and are linked, until one has not become firmly attached to these, until proper nisbat has not been attained to these, until they are not fulfilled at a level of complete perfection, until then kámil wiláyet will not be attained.

Recognising kámil wiláyet

How does one recognise kámil wiláyet – perfection as far as wiláyet is concerned? How can one perceive which individual has attained kámil wiláyet and who has not? This, too, has to be asked of Haqq Ta'álá. Our explaining and commenting will not achieve anything. Haqq Ta'álá states:

إِنْ أَوْلِيَآؤُهٗٓ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُوْنَ

Verily, only the muttaqún are the auliyá. (S.8.34.)

This is in reply to the question: "Who are the auliyá?" Answer: "Only those who are muttaqí!" The two are interchangeable: Question: "Who are the muttaqí?" Answer: "They are the auliyá!" The muttaqí are called auliyá and the auliyá are called muttaqí.

So, wiláyete-ámmah – ordinary/ common wiláyet – as stated previously, is a weak state, after which there are stages of increased strength, as Haqq Ta'álá states elsewhere:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ۝ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ۝

Verily, the friends of Alláh have no fear and they do not grieve. Those who believe and have taqwá. (S.10.62-63)

"Alá!" This means: "Listen with open ears! Be informed! Be alert!" Then comes the word "Inna," which emphasises: "This is a fact, this is a true statement." And what is that? "Auliyá-Alláh," that "The friends of Alláh," what are the effects they reveal? "Lá khaufun-alayhim," that "In their hearts they have no fear for anybody". (That is, mentally.) "Walá-yahzanún." "And they do not become depressed." When anything happens

contrary to their temperament they do not feel grieved. And who are these people? “Allazína-ámanú wa-kánú yattaqún.” “Those who believe and have taqwá.” Here, after the word “ámanú” comes the phrase “wa-kanú yattaqún”. It is obvious that after “ámanú” there is something else that is required before the effects of “lá khaufun alayhim walá yahzanún” can become applicable. This effect of “lá khaufun alayhim walá yahzanún” will only become applicable in that person in whom, after weak ímán, strong and forceful ímán has been developed. Otherwise, what was the necessity of mentioning “wa kanú yattaqún” after “ámanú”? The reason becomes obvious that after “ámanú” something else also has to follow.

Levels of nisbat differ: weak, strong and very strong

After stating all this, it must also be understood that nisbat has different levels: Weak, strong and very strong.

At the first level, after bringing ímán, the taqwá that is present is that which is a means of discarding shierk and kufr.

After this there comes a higher stage, that, after having brought ímán, one has to abstain from major (kabírah) sins. Having attained this, there is now force and strength in that nisbat.

Intoxicants: khamr and kibr

It is to be noted that sins are connected to the záhir as well as the bátin. For example, take the drinking of khamr (alcohol): this is a sin connected to the záhir. So, he has now left off drinking, but kibr, which is connected to the bátin, he has not discarded! When he took the step of stopping the drinking of khamr, Similarly, is it not wájib and necessary for him to discard kibr as well? Both have the same status – the one intoxicates the physical body and the other intoxicates the nafs.

It becomes obvious that the khamr that he has stopped drinking is not due to the khauf of Alláh Ta’álá, but it is due to family status and considerations. Others will taunt and tease him, so he feels ashamed. He has a sense of modesty. If he had left off drinking khamr out of the khauf of Alláh Ta’álá, then this khauf of Alláh Ta’álá should also have eliminated the kibr that is brimming over within him.

Relative to leaving off khamr more concern should have been given to eliminating kibr. But he does not eliminate kibr! Why? Because the kibr within is not a visible item that others can see, Therefore, this person does not feel ashamed or bashful, he does not feel disgraced. Whereas, in drinking khamr, others will come to know and he will be shamed. Others will tease and taunt him. So it is obvious that he has left off drinking khamr for worldly considerations and not because of khaufe-iláhí and not because of his ta'alluqe-nisbat. This ímán is weak. This is not the effect that strong ímán has.

And what was stated just now, that it is more imperative to eliminate kibr than it is to abstain from khamr, is because of the following:

The person himself feels ashamed of drinking khamr. He is aware of the indignity it is associated with. Also, the intoxicating effect of drinking khamr is relatively short-lived. Whereas the intoxicating effect of kibr will increase and increase in proportion to the availability of the causes of aggrandizement – the jáh, the takabbur!

Just ponder! If a person has real, meaningful khauf, then, together with abstaining from the záhirí forbidden and harám acts, he will also abstain from what is harám as far as the bátiní forbidden and harám acts are concerned.

Also, it is possible that the imbiber of khamr may be forgiven, but it can never happen that a mutakabbir – one puffed up with kibr – who leaves this world while he is still filled with kibr, will be forgiven!

It has come in the Hadíth Sharíf that that person who has kibr in him, even to the size of a grain of rye, will not be entered into Jannat.

Ponder a bit! There is khamr and there is kibr. There are many among mankind who are safe and protected from khamr. However, as for kibr, possibly there may be that rare person who will be free of this! This kibr is such a balá (disastrous quality), that even though one concentrates fully on removing it, it comes out so slowly that a lengthy duration of time passes by before it is removed. Also, until a complete cure is not undertaken, until then it will not be eliminated.

If somebody desires that his tarbiyet be done by means of 'ilm, or by means of 'ibádat and that his isláh will be made and he desires that kibr

should be removed from within him, this is impossible in the normal course of events.

A lesson from Shaitán

May Alláh Ta'álá bless Shaitán! This is one way of expressing it! For Shaitán has left us an exemplary lesson! He has not done anything for himself. Whatever transgression he committed is a different issue. However, he has left us a very huge lesson, in that he has proclaimed: "O you group of scholars ('ulemá)! O you group of worshippers ('ábeds)! Just look at me! Was I in any way deficient in knowledge ('ilm)? Why do scholars become overawed with my knowledge? Why are they terrified? Did I lack in knowledge in any way? I had abundant 'ilm! Did I lack in any way as far as 'ibádat is concerned? My 'ibádat was unlimited! You cannot possibly make as much 'ibádat! Thousands of years I prostrated with my head in sajdah!"

Yes, he had even performed 'ibádat for thousands of years. So, what was lacking? The answer is: There was no tarbiyet! And the factor that was an obstacle to tarbiyet was takabbur!

That is why I am saying that he has left us a lesson and has shown us that it is impossible that merely through teaching and learning (ta'lím and ta'allum) kibr will go away and that through more and more 'ibádat, kibr will go away. This just cannot happen. "Just look at me!" is what Shaitán is telling us.

As more and more záhirí means arise for performing good, so too does takabbur increase: as there is progress in 'ilm, so too does takabbur increase; as 'ibádat increases, so too does takabbur increase; as the means of worldly progress increase, so too does takabbur increase. As long as the special and specific measures are not adopted to remove the intoxicating effects of the sins of the bátin, this intoxication will not disappear. This nisbat is weak. This nisbat is a feeble connection.

Alláh Ta'álá states: "O you believers! Do not be deficient in fulfilling the rights of Alláh and His Rasúl!"

The rights of muhabbat and khauf

What are these rights?

The rights are many: For example, the rights of muhabbat and the rights of khauf. So, what are the demands of muhabbat and what are the demands of khauf?

Take muhabbat: Muhabbat should have a number of effects following in its wake. This means, for example, that muhabbat demands that whatever deeds, whatever amal, that we have been ordered to carry out, they should be carried out in the easiest of manner, in the most simplified way. With muhabbat, a mere hint (ishárah) from the Mahbúb, the Loved One, Is sufficient. It should not be that even as far as clear and straightforward orders are concerned, there are blatant deficiencies!

Among the clear-cut and indisputable orders is that of performing namáz. So, is it a demand of muhabbat that this explicit and binding order should be neglected? This is a sign of a very weak and feeble ta'alluq. Very appropriately has the poet said:

سامنے گھر کے ہے مسجد مگر آباد نہیں
بے خودی کا ہے یہ عالم کہ خدا نہیں

In front of the house stands the masjid, but it is not frequented;

Selfish – unaware or unconscious – in this world, in that Alláh Ta'álá is not remembered!

To continue: At a different place Záte-Bárí Ta'álá states:

يَآَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اتَّقُوا اللهَ حَقَّ تُقٰتِهٖ وَلَا تَمُوْتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ۝

O you who believe! Fear Alláh as He should be feared and die not save as those who have surrendered (unto Him.) (S.3.102.)

The stage after ímán is taqwá and the demand of taqwá is haqqe-taqwá, which means to abstain from major sins and to abstain from minor sins as well. And this process has to continue until one abstains also from that which is doubtful. A Hadíth Sharíf in Bukhárí Sharíf states:

اَلْحَلَالُ بَيِّنٌ وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ فَاسْتَنْزِهُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْتَبِهَاتِ

What is halál is clear and what is harám is clear; and in-between the two is what is doubtful. Stay away from what is doubtful.

The word “fastanzihú” is derived from the root word “nazhat,” which means “to be away from”. In other words: Until you cannot save yourselves from what is doubtful, you will not develop any cleanliness or elegance in your ímán.

Why has the order been given that we should save ourselves from that which is doubtful? The reason is that there should develop in one’s nisbat and bond a special force and strength. Until one does not also abstain from what is doubtful, until then that force and strength is not worthy of being termed “force and strength” in the true sense of these words. This I referred to earlier when I stated that nisbat has different degrees: weak, strong and very strong.

So, those venerable persons on whom this effect of nisbat has taken a hold, they take care and vigilance from way ahead to abstain from what is doubtful (mushtabahát). Not only do they carry out the rights of what is wájib, but they are also vigilant about the rights of what is optional (mustahab).

Now, take the word “mustahab”. The infinitive of this word is “istihbáb,” whose root is “hub”. The meaning of “hub” is “muhabbat” (love) and when there is” hub-filláh” (love of Alláh Ta’álá), then its effects will be seen in the záhir and bátin. So, it now becomes obvious that whosoever has muhabbat for Záte-Bárí Ta’álá will not be contented with safeguarding merely the wájib rights on him, but the urge and demand that this muhabbat will have will be for him to fulfil what is mustahab – whose root is “hub” – as well.

Similarly, that person who has khauf will abstain not only from what is clearly demarcated in nusús (Qur’án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf) as harám, but he will also abstain from all that which is considered to be doubtful – that is, whether to these items are halál or harám, according to strong evidence and the principles of the Sharí’at.

This nisbat will be “strong” or “very strong,” as we have seen from glimpses of the lives of our auliyá-Alláh.

The qissah of the two watermelons brought by a villager

An incident is related concerning our Hadhrat, Pír and Murshid, Hadhratwálá,

Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه:

Once, a villager came to him and presented him with two watermelons. Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه asked. “Why did you bring two? What was the necessity? You could have brought just one.” The villager replied: “Why, don’t you have two wives? That is why I brought two.”

Being a countryman, he had a simple an informal manner of speaking. “One is for the one wife and the other is for the other.” Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه said: “That seems to be in order. However, if the weight of one watermelon is more and the weight of the other is less, then one wife will receive the one that is greater in weight and the other will receive the one that is lesser in weight. This will be contrary to fairness and justice, because there is no equality between the two. And the order (of the Sharí’at) is that there should be equality.”

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه was well known in the matter of dealing with equality between his wives.

The villager appeared unperturbed. He said: “I know you; Therefore, I have brought you two that are equal in weight. If you don’t believe me weigh them in that scale of yours.”

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه kept a scale nearby. Whatever he sent to his wives he used to carefully weigh equally before sending the items to them. If any item was tied with a piece of string, he used to cut even the string in half, sending each half to each one.

Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه told the villager: “That won’t be necessary. You are a Muslim. Since you have stated that I should verify on my scale the weights as being equal, then it is obvious the weights of the two are equal. But, dear sáhib, there is one other matter – let me clarify that as well: If one watermelon is less sweet and the other is sweeter, then the sweeter one will go to the one and the one that is less sweet will go to the other. So, where is the fairness? Where is there equality?”

The villager, quite abashed, said: “I did not dive into them! How should I know which one is less sweet and which one not? That you decide.” Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه said: “Fine. Bring both to the scale.”

The villager picked up both the watermelons and took them to the scale. Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه went over, took out a knife and, judging carefully

and accurately, marked each watermelon in the middle. He then cut both of them, taking half of each, placed them on one pan of the scale and the remaining two halves he placed in the other pan. They balanced.

"Choudrey-Sáhib! The sweet and the less sweet, both are now combined. They have also been weighed equally. Now, even in the matter of sweetness there is equality. Is everything in order now?" The villager exclaimed. "You cut very fine points!"

That is to say that Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه went to a tremendous amount of effort in such a "petty" matter. Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه replied: "Choudrey-Sáhib! The effort and trouble incurred in this world is nothing compared to that which we will have to face in the hereafter!"

You see the effect of khauf and khashiyet? We were shown in a practical manner what khauf is, what khashiyet is. The Qur'án Sharíf states:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمٰٓؤُا

Verily, the learned ('ulemá) among His bondsmen fear Alláh alone. (S.35.28.)

"Innamá" is there to add emphasis. When a person has abstained from what is harám in his záhirí actions because of khauf, then the effect of that khauf should be evidenced in his bátin also. He should abstain from what is harám with regard to the bátin as well. Just as there will be a reckoning on the drinking of khamr, there will be a reckoning on takabbur as well. Just as the former has to be discarded, the latter also has to be discarded. In actual fact, it is more important to discard the bátiní ill of takabbur.

Ghíbat is an evil of the bátin. What is its basis? It is takabbur. So, a person may have abstained from ziná – ziná being a harám záhirí act – but ghíbat, which is a bátiní harám and forbidden act, he has not discarded! Of these two, to discard the one and not the other, what is the reason for this differentiation?

The qissah of the wife of a sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه not leaving her house

Speaking about khauf, I am reminded of an incident concerning huqúqs, related to us by Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه. Possibly this talk is being relayed to the womenfolk as well, so they should also listen attentively.

It is related in the Hadíth Sharíf that a sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه became ill. He took a turn for the worse and it was feared that he would not live long. This sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه sent another sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه to his married daughter: "Go and tell her that her father's condition is serious. He has an inner longing to see her. Please come." This sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه went to the daughter and passed on the message. The daughter replied: "My husband has gone out having given me the instruction that, until he returns, I am not to set my foot outside the house. How can I go? Ask Huzúre-Akram صلی الله علیه وسلم and if he were to give permission, then I shall go. Otherwise, I shall abide by the prohibition of my husband."

After getting married, the rights of the husband take precedence over the rights of the mother and father. In order to be able to fulfil rights correctly, one requires a great deal of 'ilm. And mere 'ilm, in itself, is also not sufficient because 'ilm will create only an awareness. But in order to act one requires 'ilm-e-kámil. What is 'ilm-e-kámil? It is that 'ilm that is associated with an intuitive force and fervour (zouq-o-wajadán) that motivates one into action. And that which does not motivate one into action, cannot be termed 'ilm. Ponder: If one possesses an item to perform a particular function, but it is not utilised as such, of what use is it?

The sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه went to Huzúre-Akram صلی الله علیه وسلم, Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم said: "Because the husband has forbidden her, therefore it is not permissible (ná-já'iz) for her to go." The sahábíyah رضی الله تعالی غنها did not go.

Sometime later somebody else came to her with the message: "His condition is very serious. If you wish to see his face, go now." The daughter gave the same reply as on the previous occasion. Huzúre-Akram صلی الله علیه وسلم gave the same answer as well. "It is not já'iz for her to go. Her husband has forbidden her that she is not allowed to set her foot outside." Her father passed away. A sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه brought her the news: "Now he has passed away. Now go and see him." She again repeated what she had said earlier: "Go and ask Huzúre-Akram صلی الله علیه وسلم". Huzúre-Akram صلی الله علیه وسلم said: "Even now it is not já'iz." So that even now she did not go.

Do you see the state of her ímán? Do you see the nisbat? This was the effect of the ta'alluq that had been established with Záte-Haqq Ta'álá.

She did not go. After passing away, ghusl was given and the kafan was wrapped and he was buried. Thereafter, Huzúre-Akram صلى الله عليه وسلم returned home. Hadhrat Jibríl عليه السلام descended and said: "Alláh Ta'álá conveys to you His salám. And He has also says that convey to that girl the message that what she had done in observance of the rights of her husband, in observance of the Sharí'at, that by this action of her's Alláh Ta'álá is so happy with her that, by virtue of her deed, He has forgiven her father!"

Ponder! This is fulfilling rights, which results from khaufe-Haqq! This can be termed "fulfilling rights," in the real sense of the word. If she had gone to see her father she would have shed two or three more tears. However, the rights that she fulfilled through the effect of khauf and khashiyet by acting as she did, this is in reality correct knowledge (sahíh 'ilm.) Real khauf, in the true sense of the word, should have an effect, as far as what is harám and forbidden, in the záhir and, even more so, it should have an effect on the bátin. Actually, this abstention from harám is subservient and subordinate to the taqwá of the bátin.

The garments of taqwá are best of all

To understand this look at the clothes we are wearing. These clothes cover our body externally and are an offshoot of the taqwá of the bátin. As Záte-Bárí Ta'álá states in the Qur'án Sharíf:

وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوٰى ۙ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ؕ

Clothes of taqwá – these are the best! (S.7.26.)

So, if we do not have any taqwá, then these outer clothes also fall off.

Similarly, these eyes that are set in our head are our záhirí eyes. We also have an "eye" in the heart. If the "eye" in the heart visualises something, then that item will be visualised by the external eyes as well. For example: If the inner "eye" has hijab and shame and modesty in it, then the external eyes will also have purdah in them. When there is no purdah of the heart, then there will be no purdah of the eyes as well. It is incorrect to state: "The purdah of the heart is there – what is the necessity to make purdah of the eyes?" Remember well that, if there is hayá and sharam (modesty

and shame) and hijab in the heart, then there will definitely be purdah of the eyes as well. Not having purdah of the eyes is evidence and proof that there is shamelessness and lack of hijab in the heart. If there is khauf of Záte-Bárí Ta'álá in the heart, then the eyes will make purdah when the individual leaves the house. And if the heart has no khauf of Záte-Bárí Ta'álá, then the eyes also will not make purdah.

Take note of this áyet of the Qur'án Sharíf:

(اَللّٰهُ) يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوْنَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ۚ إِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۝

(Alláh) knows that which they keep hidden, and that which they proclaim. Verily, He is aware of what is in the breast (of men)! (S.11.5)

Note well: Alláh Ta'álá is aware of your movements outside and He is aware of your staying in your homes as well.

Having been informed of the above what should one bear in mind? The following: that when you set your foot outside, ponder as to why you have set your foot outside. Set out with this concept in mind that Alláh Ta'álá is saying: "You have with you certain of My trusts. These five parts of your body are My trusts, which you have been made responsible to guard: The eyes, the ears, the tongue, the limbs and the heart. The custody of the eye is that you look at what you have been told to look at; and what We have forbidden you to look at, do not look at it."

So, if we have utilised the eyes to look at ghair-mahrams, then this is contrary to khauf, it is contrary to taqwá. It is apparent then that taqwá may be present, but it is a weak taqwá and not a strong taqwá. If strong taqwá was present, then its effect would be as follows: Alláh Ta'álá has stated that He knows your movements outside and also your activities in your homes. Then, when setting your foot outside your house, it would be with this awareness, this khauf, this thought: "The aforementioned parts of my body should not be utilised wrongfully!"

What is termed as being real khauf and real taqwá lasts not only for two or three days, but is ever present. Haqq Ta'álá states:

وَلَا تَمُوْتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ۝

And die not save as those who have surrendered (unto Him.) (S.3.102)

That is, fulfil the Haqq of taqwá until the time of death.

We had stated that nisbat and ta'alluq are great things. Yesterday the talk was on nisbat and some incidents were also related. Nisbat can be weak, or it can be strong, or very strong. The objective is to develop a very strong nisbat and that very strong nisbat is an objective till the time of death. In connection with this, I had related an incident concerning Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه, to demonstrate what the effects of khauf really are: Did the wives know who received what? Did they know what the weights of the watermelons were? Would they have known who received less or more? Would they have known who received the sweet watermelon and who received the one not as sweet? Who was there to see?

If one were to ask any Muslim: "Is it your i'tiqád that Alláh Ta'álá is Hádhir-Názir?" What will his answer be? "Definitely! Without doubt, Alláh Ta'álá is Hádhir-Názir." This belief is at the intellectual level, whereas the objective is to have this 'aqídah at the level of hál. This means that the 'aqídah that Alláh Ta'álá is Hádhir-Názir should have the effect that in every action this belief should be manifest and evident. The effects of muhabbat will be evident on the basis of nisbat – that, to the extent of the nisbat, to that degree will be seen the effects of muhabbat. In the same way, the different effects of khauf will be evident proportionate to the degree of nisbat one has.

Concerning nisbat, some issues were discussed yesterday and today too. The rest, in-shá-Alláh Ta'álá, will be discussed on some other occasion.

[As it was time for Maghrib, du'á was made and the majlis ended.]

THE THIRD MAJLIS

[The third majlis took place on the following day, Monday, 5 Safar.]

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

بَعْدَالْحَمْدِ وَالصَّلٰوة

Yesterday and the day before we spoke on the subject of nisbat – the ta'alluq of that affiliation and its effects.

Who should one listen to?

Who is the person speaking and what should he be like? Also, what should be the condition of those who are listening?

To listen to all and sundry [that is, to listen to every Tom, Dick and Harry] and for such persons to deliver lectures is contrary to the rules and principles in the Qur'án Sharíf. The principle in the Qur'án Sharíf is as follows: That person who has in him two qualities, can be listened to without putting forward any "whys?" and "wherefores?" any "ifs" and "buts". Proof of this is in the Qur'án Sharíf. In Súrah Yásín, in the second rukú, Alláh Ta'álá has related a qissah which, briefly, is as follows: Záte-Bárí Ta'álá sent two Rasúls to Antioch for the hidáyet of the people. As on previous occasions in the past, the habit of the people was to oppose any Rasúl sent to them and to harass such a Rasúl, to such an extent that a Rasúl would be killed as well. The people were not prepared to listen to the Haqq. When bátil becomes so forcefully ingrained, then the ears and the heart cease to place any importance to the words of Haqq Ta'álá.

So, this community also opposed these two Rasúls and were on the point of killing them. At this point Záte-Bárí Ta'álá sent to them a third Rasúl in order to support and assist these two. However, the community behaved in the same manner to this third Rasúl as well. A youth, Habíb Najár, a carpenter, had brought ímán on the guidance of these Rasúls. He lived some distance from the town. When he came to hear that this is the manner in which his community was behaving towards these Rasúls, the poor fellow, overcome with dread, came running to their aid and protection. He said:

قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ۙ اتَّبِعُوْا مَنْ لَّا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ۝

"O my people! Follow those who have been sent! Follow those who ask of you

no fee and who are rightly guided." (S.36.20-21.)

As if to say: "O my people! What has happened to you that you are opposing these Rasúls? There is absolutely no reason for opposing them, but, on the contrary, the opposite should be the case.

That is to say, looking at it from the worldly point of view, there are two qualities, hubbe-mál and hubbe-jáh where a representative may do a certain piece of work for these objectives. Both these qualities are based on selfish and personal motives. And these Rasúls do not have these selfish motives. Their shán is this that they desire no remuneration. They are not asking for any compensation. They desire no material return for their service. They are inviting you purely to the cause of Lilláhiyet for your own welfare. They are calling you to what is a protection and safeguard against danger and what is a means of attaining benefit. And they do not ask for any material reward or compensation, which would be obstacles to listening to such individuals."

Individuals expecting material benefits may be suspected of doing so for personal gain. As we see these days that there is a flood of fund-raisers. If the villagers come to know that this person has primarily come to raise funds and the wáz, and so forth, are merely incidental events, then they may even sit and listen to the talk as an act of politeness, but nobody is prepared to listen with the heart. Some, who are free in their speech, will finally even voice this thought: "Mauláná! When this was your purpose, then why did you make us sit so long and vex us unnecessarily? You should have said that you have come to collect funds for such and such a madrasah and we would have given you whatever." So you see! Where did they listen? Everything gone to waste! The monetary motive was detected!

To carry on: The youth argued further: "That is the first point. The second point is that they are 'muhtadá'. These are such that they are on the correct Path. They are Sáhibe-sirátam-mustaqím and Sáhibe-ihtidá. So, they do not possess one quality (having ulterior motives) and they do possess the noble quality of ihtidáyet (being rightly guided) and when the obstacles do not exist, then what prevents you from listening to their message?"

We can see that what this youth is saying is absolutely correct because

this is being related by Záte-Bárí Ta'álá in that He is saying that one should look at the person to see if he has selfish or ulterior motives or not, whether he is desirous of mal or jáh. These are two qualities which are obstacles in listening to and accepting what a person has to say. When these two qualities have been negated and they are on correct hidáyet themselves, then there are no reasons for not listening to them. Also, for greater reassurance, look at their characters and conduct, their dealings, their social lifestyles, and so forth.

In other words, look at them from the aspects of 'ibádat, mu'ámulát, mu'ásharat and akhláq. These are the criteria on which to assess and judge people. And, after being scrutinised, if these qualities are present in the manner they should be, then there is no reason for not listening to them. The presence of these qualities within them will be proof of their taqwá, that they have an extreme level of taqwá. And a muttaqí is one who has solicitude for others in this world and also in the hereafter.

Worldly friends will be enemies

Proof of this appears in the Qur'án Sharíf. Haqq Ta'álá states:

اَلْأَخِلَّآءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۞

Friends on that Day will be foes one unto another, save those who are muttaqí. (S.43.67.)

Haqq Ta'álá states that these worldly friends will, on the day of Qiyámat, be enemies one unto the other. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم also forbade us from making friends of such people. For himself, too, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم desired friends, but... Note the tone! Note the desire! Note the quest!

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يَّنْفَعُنِيْ حُبُّهٗ عِنْدَكَ

O Alláh! Bless me with Your muhabbat and the muhabbat of that person whose muhabbat, in Your eyes, will be of benefit to me!

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَ حُبَّ مَنْ يُّحِبُّكَ

O Alláh! I am desirous of Your muhabbat and the muhabbat of that person who has muhabbat for You!

These are the criteria and the yardsticks for making friends! There is no question of making just anyone a friend! See, Haqq Ta'álá has stated that on the day of Qiyámat that friend who lays claim to be a friend in this world, may turn out to be your enemy! You may find somebody saying: "Janáb! Do not give it a thought! Where you shed your perspiration I am ready to shed my blood!" This is mere lip service. There is no reality in it. It does not come from the heart. It is a mere cliché.

A qissah of a real muttaqí friend

If one were to search for this quality one would find it only in a real muttaqí. Our Hadhratwálá, Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه related a qissah:

A particular sheikh one day had a sudden desire for eating khír – khír is a dish prepared by boiling rice in milk with sugar added to sweeten it. However, the sheikh did not have all the ingredients available.

Some days passed and it so happened that some milk arrived. The two khádims who stayed with the sheikh, informed the sheikh: "Hadhrat! Some milk has arrived! We have with us some sugar and we also have some rice. You had also expressed the wish to eat some khír. Therefore, grant us permission to prepare some khír for you." The sheikh replied: "Go ahead!"

The khádims placed some rice in the milk and set the pot on the fire to cook. As it cooked the milk boiled up to the top of the pot and the two khádims, not wanting the milk to spill over, skimmed off the top with a spoon and sipped it up.

When the khír was made, it was dished out in a plate, allowed to cool slightly and then served to the sheikh. The sheikh scooped up a spoonful and brought it to his mouth, but stopped himself from eating it. The khádims were watching and coaxed the sheikh: "Huzúr! After much longing this khír is now available and you are not eating it?" The sheikh replied. "How can I eat it? I perceive the odour of theft emanating from it!" The khádims exclaimed: "Theft! But nobody came here! And we ourselves boiled

the milk and added the sugar and the rice. We prepared the khír with our own hands!"

However, there exists a certain exquisiteness, a discernment and sagacity, qualities resulting from correct taqwá and an abundance of zikr. Mind you, mere abundance of zikr is not sufficient. An abundance of zikr and correct taqwá have certain effects through which these qualities can be recognised. This reminds me of the qissah of Hadhrat Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه:

The qissah of Hadhrat Gangohí's رحمة الله عليه fine sense

It was a hot summer's day and he felt thirsty. By the way, this was related to us by Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه. As a poet put it: *"The tongue is mine, but the talk is his."*

To continue: When the hot summer winds blow it is pleasurable to drink water from earthen goblets. The earthen water pot was kept nearby and on it was placed the drinking goblet. The khádim poured some water into the goblet and served it to Hadhrat Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه. When he touched his lips to the goblet he commented: "The smell of corpses is coming from this goblet! It appears this clay is from the qabrastán.

Among any student group there are some students who are very keen and enthusiastic and have a very strong urge to investigate; and so it should be. So, immediately a student ran to the potter from whom the earthenware was bought. He asked the potter: "Where did you obtain the clay for the last batch of earthen pots and dishes you made?" The potter replied, somewhat embarrassed: "You see, the weather was not too good. The rains had started. I secretly went to the qabrastán at night and brought the clay from there and made the dishes from that clay. The clay was from there."

Look at the changes that were made to the original clay – water was added, then the clay was shaped into utensils, then these were dried in the sun and air and finally placed in an oven where the heat of the fire baked them. Despite all these changes taking place, when the goblet was lifted to his mouth Hadhrat Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí رحمة الله عليه observed: "The smell of corpses is coming from this goblet! It appears as if this clay

is from the qabrastán!"

This is the exquisite and finely attuned temperaments of such individuals! You can now gauge the degree of their perceptiveness. Now, when people of different temperaments present themselves and say things contrary to their temperaments, what degree of pain and grief do they not cause? However, these Alláh-wálá personalities also have a tremendous degree of hilm and they will not utter a single word of annoyance – except where it is an occasion for tarbiyet so that the feelings of the person addressing them is taken into consideration. This person should not be embarrassed. If the internal faults of the person were to be disclosed, he would sense it and feel humiliated.

Coming back to the qissah of the buzurg and the khír: When he had lifted the spoonful of khír to his lips he had remarked. "I perceive the odour of theft emanating from it!" The astonished khádims tried very hard to reassure him that nobody had come there who could possibly have stolen from the khír, that they had prepared the khír with their own hands, while they themselves were present. The sheikh was adamant and would not eat the khír. The two khádims finally gave up and fell into thought.

Suddenly it struck them. "Is it not possible that the overflowing milk which we had skimmed off and drunk, without Hadhrat's permission, that this is included in the category of theft?" Immediately they got up and informed the sheikh: "Huzúr! The milk that was boiling over, we skimmed the top and drank it." The sheikh replied. "But this is exactly what I was referring to all the time!"

This is the way these personages speak! Their statements are innocent and guileless, sweet and charming!

So far, so good. However, for their error the khádims had to be penalised. This was not such a major crime that it could not be forgiven. The milk was drunk and that was it. But no! The purpose and object is isláh for the future. At times, an incident is very trivial, but its underlying basis may be very grave. And these personages do not look at the act only, but more at the underlying basis. The penalty will be according to that.

Punishment is for the sake of rectification

Here is another qissah:

You may have heard that there was a khádim, Ghulám ’Alí by name, staying in attendance to Hadhrat Mirzá Mazhar Jánjánah رحمة الله عليه. One day he was fanning Hadhrat Mirzá Mazhar Jánjánah رحمة الله عليه with a hand fan, fanning him very, very gently, with this thought in mind: “My sheikh has an extremely sensitive temperament, I must not annoy him.” Possibly hardly any breeze reached his sheikh. Hadhrat Mirzá Mazhar Jánjánah رحمة الله عليه exclaimed: “Don’t you have any life in your arm?” Ghulám ’Alí began fanning vigorously, upon which Hadhrat Mirzá Mazhar Jánjánah رحمة الله عليه exclaimed. “What! Are you now trying to blow me away?” Ghulám ’Alí muttered under his breath: “Neither is this good enough, nor that!” These words, although muttered very softly, were loud enough to reach the ears of the sheikh. “Set the fan down here!” he ordered harshly. “Leave the khánqáh!” Ghulám ’Alí did as he was commanded. He set the fan down and left the khánqáh.

Outwardly, was it really such a big crime that he had to stop fanning his sheikh and be expelled from the khánqáh? Try to do this nowadays, and Shaitán will cause the person to run away! But those people were of a different calibre. Where would he run to? No! He apologised. He asked to be forgiven. He pleaded and entreated, he petitioned and begged. Finally, when the sheikh saw that, yes, the isláh of the nafs has been made, the lesson had gone to his heart, that it was firmly embedded, then he was forgiven. He was recalled to the khánqáh. The object was isláh and that had been achieved.

At this moment sitting in front of me are my children.

[Tulebá from the Jámi’ah Ashrafiyah were present.]

My temperament is also that of a student of Dín and I live with my students in a very informal way, so much so that some of my pírbháis and others from my own silsilah keep on admonishing me that it is not appropriate that I live with the students in such a manner. I tend to be very, very informal. I fully accept what these well-wishers have to say, but the problem is that this pattern of behaviour has become second nature to me. How is it possible that it will now change in my old age?

In any case, let us continue. On one occasion, when Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه

related this incident concerning Hadhrat Mirzá Mazhar Jánjánah رحمة الله عليه to us in a majlis, a Mauláná Sáhib posed the question: “Hadhrat! Ghulám ’Alí Sháh did not commit any such grave error, but his punishment was unduly severe. That is something I do not understand.” Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه replied: “What have the molvís studied? Yes, they know how to raise objections! You and I will object, but, in reality, the sheikh had captured the underlying cause of the error. What went through his mind was the following: ‘Oho! There is still some deficiency in his isláh! My comments that he has no life in his arm and then that he is trying to blow me away, caused a heaviness, a burden, in his temperament. He felt annoyed. This annoyance was such that he could not even contain himself and he had to blurt out that neither is this good enough, nor that! What is the underlying basis for this reaction? It shows provocation. Even though there are no flames, live embers are definitely present!

Would you consider it permissible to place live embers in your clothes cupboard? Or, if somebody were to try to place live embers among your clothes, would you tolerate it? It is obvious that you would never allow it, because, even as flames will do their work (i.e. burn your clothes to ashes rapidly, live embers will do the very same: they may take long to blaze up, but when the clothes catch alight, that is the end!

So, the sheikh immediately understood: “The live embers of razílah ghussah are present, a flame is still present. If, by my remarks, the embers and flames blazed up then, were he to meet up with any situation contrary to his temperament when he is away from here, one does not know what devastation he will wrought when these flames of ghussah blaze up again!”

These are the ramifications of isláh! For you and I, these are “petty” issues, but as far as these personages are concerned these are grave and important matters. They desire to create such individuals – especially if the individuals have already created a close relationship – that there should be no sign or vestige of ghussah. They wish to create individuals who are a manifestation of the attributes, the sifát, of Záte-Bárí Ta’álá, that the quality of hilm and not mere tahallum, is produced in those connected to them.

The difference between hilm and tahallum

Ponder a moment. There is a difference between hilm and tahallum. Tahallum has the connotation of "difficulty" in its meaning. In other words, when somebody says anything contrary to the person's temperament, he stops himself from retaliating, but only because of some expediency and only by exerting some force on himself, but still rankling within himself. On the other hand, hilm means that the person is completely indifferent: he does not even react within himself; he is completely deaf.

So, these personages wish to raise those connected to them to this level. So much so, that if a bhanghí (a sweeper who removes the night soil) or his female counterpart, were to drop a basket of faeces on his head, there would be absolutely no trace of ghussah! Thus, in our opinion we feel that what grave error did Ghulám 'Alí commit that he was meted out such a severe punishment? However, ask the sheikh! Ask the rúhání physician! He recognised that, in one who was especially close to him, there were still embers of ghussah! There is still a flaring up! There is the necessity for isláh still. After some time, when he had assessed that the embers had been removed, he gave him permission to return. Ghulám 'Alí came back.

We were speaking about the theft of milk. The sheikh said: "There should be some punishment." The khádims replied: "Huzúr! Whatever you deem fit!" The sheikh said: "Go and stand in the sun." In the heat of summer he made them stand exposed to the blazing sun. People like us would have run away! However, these two went to stand in the sun. Soon, the perspiration started dripping on the ground because of the heat. After a short while the sheikh asked: "Do you wish to say something?" The two khádims did not have the courage to speak on their own, to ask to be forgiven, so the sheikh himself prompted them. To understand this, remember it was a question of isláh, that is why they were made to stand in the sun. In actual fact, there could be no greater degree of mercy in anybody else. He asked again: "Do you wish to say anything?" This time the two responded: "We have erred. We ask to be forgiven. It will never happen again in future."

The punishment meted out was with an eye on the underlying cause of the error. The sheikh perceived that if this was their attitude with regard to the milk belonging to him, it must not happen that they start behaving in the same manner with items belonging to others, that they utilise others'

items without permission, that they even start laying their hands on items belonging to their friends!

Ishráfe-nafs – a mas'alah of Sulúk

At times, when an item is obtained on the basis of "ishráfe-nafs," these personages consider this also to be harám. This ploy has become prevalent among friends nowadays. For example: Somebody goes up to his friend and asks: "Where did you buy this pen? It is lovely, má-shá-Alláh!" The poor person being addressed has a noble disposition. He is also a person of stature in the community. He realises that this person fancies the pen and wishes to buy one. He, therefore, tells him: "Don't be concerned. I do have another pen as well. Here, you take this one." This person takes the pen.

Taking this pen is ná-já'iz. Taking the pen on this basis is termed "ishráfe-nafs".

Ishráfe-nafs – a qissah of a student bringing food for his ustád

A tálibe-'ilm was studying by a buzurg álim. One day, as he arrived for his studies, he noticed some signs of hunger on his ustáds face. The tálibe-'ilm sought permission to go out and said: "Hadhrat, I'll be back shortly." He went home and brought back some food on a tray and presented the food to his ustád. "Huzúr! Kindly partake of the food." The ustád replied. "Yes, I am hungry, but the moment you departed the thought came to me that you will bring me some food. This is ishráfe-nafs. This is why I cannot eat it." Not saying anything, the tálibe-'ilm took the tray and went away. In a short while he was back with the tray. "Huzúr! I am certain there is no longer any ishráfe-nafs, so please partake of the food now." The ustád replied. "Yes, the ishráfe-nafs is no longer present: there is no such yearning and anticipation left." He was hungry and ate the food.

These are the isláhí masá'il of Sulúk – Sulúk which is a portion of the Sharí'at, an altaf portion – supremely exquisite, highly elegant, beautiful and delicate! Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه used to say: "People have despoiled Sulúk. Sulúk is an extremely exquisite field. How exquisite and delicate? As exquisite and delicate as constitutes the rúh. And whose rúh? As is the rúh of the malá'ikah! Such a thing has been despoiled!"

To continue: For the underlying reason that the two khádims had behaved in this manner towards their sheikh and that tomorrow they will behave Similarly, with their friends, the sheikh had meted out the punishment. They were made to stand for some time in the heat of the summer sun. When their punishment was over, the sheikh said: "There is in the community a person who cups blood. Call him."

In previous times, cupping, the cutting of a vein and letting out some blood, was a form of medical treatment. The khádims went to call him. When he arrived the sheikh said, pointing to the area where the ground was damp with the perspiration of the two khádims: "Kindly estimate the volume of liquid that would cause that dampness. Má-shá-Alláh, you are a man of experience. Gauge for me the quantity of liquid that would result in that much dampness." This person scrutinised the area, pondered for a moment and then said: "Huzúr, this wetness is caused by two to three tolas of water." The sheikh said: "This is not water. This dampness is the perspiration of these two friends of mine! It is my wish that you cup that much of my blood and shed it where their perspiration has dripped!"

Ponder a moment! The sheikh wishes to shed his blood where the sweat of his khádims had dripped! Upon hearing this, the two khádims immediately stood pleading with the sheikh: "Huzúr! What you did was for our isláh. Do not do this to yourself!" The sheikh said: "It will be so. Where you have shed your perspiration, I shall shed my blood!"

Concern for the muríd is a special quality of a sheikh

This is pírí-murídi! This quality of pír, by the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá, still exists today! He has not become extinct. In previous ages, there were more such personages. Nowadays, not so many. If the pír is not such, then he is not worthy of being a pír. That is, he is not worthy of becoming a sheikh. To be a mere pír is one thing; to be a sheikh is another. This Sulúk is a specialty – a science and an art. Sulúk is not the name given to mere reading about Tasawwuf. It is not a question of having merely pulled through a chillah. This is a completely different thing. What you are listening to is something completely different.

Ponder a moment. The sheikh paid no heed to his khádims. He had

his blood cupped and had it shed where the perspiration of the two had dripped. This he did despite the pleadings of the two.

Now you should have some idea that this is that muttaqí that will be of assistance to you in this world, as well as the hereafter. Your worldly friend will tell you: "Brother! What are you saying? Where you shed your perspiration, I will shed my blood!" But when the occasion arrives, he will run away!

There are children sitting in front of me. They are busy making friends. For their benefit let me mention a qissah related to us by Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه.What can I say about what he had related to us? Boys! Listen! Take note of what type of friendship you should have and with whom. Also take note that to be a tálibe-'ilm and to make friends and acquaintances is contrary to being a tálibe-'ilm. Tálibe-'ilm and friendship? These two cannot co-exist. Ikhtilát (associating with others) is an extremely evil thing. It is poison for tulebá! Nay! Worse than poison!

A qissah of a youngster's friend and his father's friend

One youngster started coming home very late. Several days passed in this manner. One day the father asked: "Son, you come home late every night. Where do you go?" The son replied: "Abbáján, I have a friend. I visit him. Every night. We sit and talk. That is why it gets so late." The father said: "Really? Does one still find friends in this age? I was under the impression that friends existed in previous times. What use is a friend these days? Are there really such friends in this age?" The son replied. "Yes, Abbá! He is such a friend, one who says that he will shed his blood where my perspiration drips!" The father said: "Very well. Tomorrow, when you go visit him, take me with."

The following evening the father deliberately delayed setting off, with the result that it was past the normal time of his visit when they reached the friend's house. The front door was locked.

The son knocked and also called out to his friend. After having called out several times, the friend, from inside the house, asked: "Who is it?" The son replied. "It is I, your friend," mentioning his name. The friend said: "Oho! You have come rather late." He came and opened the door. Before

the son could say a word, this friend of his, the one who had said that he was prepared to shed his blood where the son's perspiration drips, quickly spoke: "I slept rather late. I'm still feeling very drowsy. At this moment my tabiyet does not feel at all right. I ask to be forgiven." So saying, he closed the door and latched the chain again and went back inside.

The father spoke. "You had said that he is your friend. How has he turned out to be? Come. Let me show you. I have a friend living nearby. I have gone old and so has he. I have not visited him for several years. Come. Let us go to him. Then you can judge for yourself."

So saying, they set off again. When they reached the father's friend's house, the father called out to his friend. Immediately the friend replied from inside: "Hang on. I'm coming! Its many years since you have visited me!"

Kindly note that the son's friend did not recognise the voice of his nightly visitor, but the father's friend immediately recognised who it was, even after a lapse of several years!

After a short delay the door opened, but what a spectacle the friend presented! On his head was a dish, in his one hand he held a bag and in the other hand a staff (lathí).

After salám and formalities were over, the father asked his friend, pointing to the items he was carrying: "What is all this?" The friend replied: "I thought to myself: 'My friend has come, after such a long time, at such an odd hour! He must be in some difficulty! It is possible that he is impoverished and hungry. So, this dish contains some food. I shall feed him from this. Or, it may be possible that he owes somebody money and this person has made life difficult for him. So, this bag contains some money to give to him. Or, it may be possible that some enemy is after him and a fight is imminent. So, this lathí will serve some use. Dear friend! I'm somewhat old, but I'll still be able to dish out a shot or two!"

The father reassured him: "There is no fight, there is no debt and I am not famished. This here is my son. He has found himself a friend. I have seen this friend of his. So, now I have brought him to see my friend."

Another qissah: a buzurg lends his friend some money

A friend is a rare species. Where is there a real friend today? Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه mentioned a qissah in this connection: A buzurg arrived at the house of his buzurg-friend. He knocked on the door. His friend answered the knock and, after saláms were exchanged, asked: "What can I do for you?" The buzurg replied: "I am in need of 500 rúpís." The friend went inside the house, took out 500 rúpís and came to give it to the buzurg, who took the money and left. There was no cross questioning. This buzurg friend then came back into the house, went to sit on the chárpáí (bed) and started weeping.

All of you know that a wife's relationship is very informal and blunt. She will blurt out whatever she wants, whenever she wants and in whatever way she wants to! So, when this buzurg husband started weeping the wife commented: "Sub-hán-Alláh! Just now, in a fit of passion, you readily took out 500 rúpís and gave it away. Now it seems you are grieving as to why you gave away the money! If that is the case, why did you give away the money in the first place?" The buzurg replied composedly: "Begum! This is not the case." "Then why are you weeping?" she countered. He replied: "I am weeping for the following reason: Tomorrow, on the day of Qiyámat, if Alláh Ta'álá were to ask: 'Why was it necessary for your friend to come to your house for assistance? Why did you not make yourself aware of his need beforehand?' What answer will I give? That is what makes me weep!"

Ponder a while! This is the friendship of the ahlulláh! These personages are of use in this world and they will be of use in the hereafter as well.

Seeking protection from deceitful friends

But you do not do the same! On my say-so don't go and take out 500 rúpís and give it away! As I have said before: The friend of today is not this type of friend who could be termed a friend. In fact, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has actually asked to be protected from the type of "friend" one comes across today. He has said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ خَلِيْلٍ مَّاكِرٍعَيْنَاهُ تَرَيَانِيْ وَقَلْبُهٗ يَرْعَانِيْٓ اِنْ رَاٰى حَسَنَةً دَفَنَهَا وَ اِنْ رَاٰى سَيِّئَةً اَذَاعَهَا

O Alláh! I seek protection from such a trickster friend – I am seeking protection from such a deceitful friend – that he stares at me so fixedly with both his eyes and it appears that he stares at me with eyes of tremendous love, but in his heart he is tearing me apart and devouring me! I am seeking protection from such a cunning, conniving friend!

How does one know that he is such a deceitful person? Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم added. "Whenever he sees anything good in me, he buries it! Whenever he sees anything favourable, anything good, any perfection in me, he buries it! He does not bring it to his lips, never mind tell anybody about it. However, whenever he sees anything bad in me, he goes around telling others about it, he publicises it. He discloses my faults to others! O Alláh! I seek protection from such a friend."

In these times one will find friends more of this type, illá-má-shá-Alláh (with a few exceptions). That is why I have to emphasise this point that you don't also take out 500 rúpís and start dishing it around!

We had touched on this subject when discussing the áyet:

اَلْأَخِلَّآءُ يَوْمَئِذٍۭ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۞

Friends on that Day will be foes one unto another, save those who are muttaqí. (S.43.67.)

Haqq Ta'álá is saying that this worldly friend is not going to be of any service to you. Here there is mere lip service and over there it will be enmity between one and the other. Yes, those who are muttaqí will be of service here and over there in the ákhirat as well.

The qissah of the kafan-chor

Another qissah comes to mind, related to us by Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه. I merely mimic Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه. I merely repeat what he narrated to us. He narrated:

A certain buzurg became ill. The illness grew worse. He realised that he would shortly pass away. It so happened that in that locality there lived a kafan-chor – a thief who would dig up the grave of a recently buried person and steal the shroud wrapped around the corpse and then sell it!

The buzurg gave the order that the kafan-char be summoned. When the kafan-chor pitched up, the buzurg said to him: "Bháí, it seems that my death is imminent. And I also know that it is your habit to steal the shroud from corpses. It must not happen that you come to steal my shroud and leave me lying there naked!"

Hearing this, the kafan-chor became petrified and hastily said: "Hadhrat! Your shroud? Taubah! Taubah! Can it ever happen?" The buzurg said: "Bháí, once habits have set in they are difficult to remove. How can I be convinced that you will not do that to me?" The kafan-chor replied: "Huzúr, you tell me what will convince you." The buzurg asked: "For how much do you sell the shrouds?" The kafan-chor replied: "For 10 rúpís." The buzurg ordered his khádim: "Give him twenty rúpís." The money was handed over to the kafan-chor who gladly accepted the sum. The buzurg then said: "Bháí, now you will not steal my shroud?" The kafan-chor replied: "Hadhrat, even before this I gave my word. Now even more so, because I have received twice the amount of money!"

The buzurg did not recover from his illness. He passed away and was buried. Night fell and the kafan-chor pitched up at the qabr.

Remember very well, that when a bad habit has become ingrained, it cannot be discarded until complete rectification (isláhe-kámil) has not taken place.

The kafan-chor dug up the grave and uncovered the shrouded body. He extended his hand to remove the shroud when, suddenly, the hand of the buzurg moved swiftly, catching hold of the hand of the kafan-chor. This was the karámat of the buzurg. However, the shock was too great for the kafan-chor and he died on the spot.

The qissah of the mulláhjí whose beard was mocked

The mention of this karámat reminds me of another qissah of another karámat. There was one mulláhjí: the poor soul was a buzurg person, having a beard gone quite white.

Alláh Ta'álá values a white beard considerably. Huzúr صلى الله عليه وسلم states,

اِنَّ اللهَ لَيَسْتَحْيِيْ مِنْ ذِي الشَّيْبِ الْمُسْلِمِ

Záte-Bárí Ta'álá feels bashful for a Muslim who has a white beard.

This buzurg used to buy his oil form a certain oil-seller (telí). Every time the buzurg came to him the oil-seller would remark: "Mianjí! Is your swinging beard better, or is the swinging bell around the neck of my bullock better?" This is the manner in which the oil-seller used to tease and joke with the mulláhjí.

Nowadays, it has become our habit not to keep a beard, which is an act of fisq (sinning openly). In other words that person not keeping a beard is a fásiq. However, to mock about a beard, to be derisive about it, is an act of kufr! For example, to say: "What is this you have kept as a sign-board?" Or to remark: "Goats keep beards!"

I advise my friends not to feel upset, but to be thankful to the person. When somebody says that goats have beards, this person is actually bearing witness to your masculinity! You will find a male-goat has a beard and that a female-goat has no beard! Also, you will find that respectable shops will have sign-boards, but places of ill-repute not necessarily so! So, what he is implying is: "You are kámil díndár and I am not kámil díndár!"

To continue: The oil-seller used to mock at the mulláhjí by comparing his beard to the bell around the neck of his bullock. Every time the mulláhjí went to the oil-seller, he was invariably mocked in this manner. However – Alláhu-Akbar! – those who are Alláh-wálá, have a tremendous degree of tolerance and quality of accommodation. He did not stop buying his oil from his shop and he thought to himself that the poor fellow is making these comments out of affection.

The mulláhjí became critically ill. Death was imminent. He instructed his close ones: "Upon my passing away, carry my janázah past the house of the oil-seller." Acting on these instructions, when he passed away, his janázah was carried past the house of the oil-seller. The oil-seller was sitting at the entrance of his house at the time. As the janázah came in line with him the mulláhjí moved aside the shroud and sat up!

It comes in the Hadíth Sharíf that the karámat of the auliyá-Alláh are Haqq in their lifetime and Haqq even after their passing away.

The mulláhjí then addressed the oil-seller: "O Mian-Telí! Today I can state that my waving beard is better than the bell hanging on your bullock!"

The question arises: Why did not the mulláhjí make this statement in his lifetime? He had heard the taunts repeatedly. After all, what type of heart is it that would not be affected at some time or other by such taunts? Think for yourself: Were not the remarks of the oil-seller such as to provoke anger? Definitely so! However, the buzurg must have straightened somebody's shoes. That is, he must have had his tarbiyet made and, as I have mentioned previously, even if you were to drop excreta on somebody who has had his tarbiyet made, that person will not show any ghussah! In this age people become bai'at on the premise of having their isláh made. However, the term "isláh" is taken, but no work is done, illá-má-shá-Alláh (with some exceptions).

The mulláhjí, having said what he needed to, lied down and the janázah proceeded. The question arises: Why did he not make this statement while still alive? Why wait for this moment to make the assertion he did?

The reason is that he did not know whether his death would be with ímán or not! So, how could he make an assertion? The following went through his mind: "Alláh forbid! Alláh forbid! But if my death is not with ímán, then the waving of the bullock's bell will be better than my beard! There is no punishment, no censure, no reproof for a bullock in the hereafter, but if my end is not with ímán, then I do not know what will be in store for me on the plains of Qiyámat!"

This is termed "khashiyet" – true fear of Alláh Ta'álá.

What happened to the kafan-chor? There was a muríd of the buzurg living nearby. The buzurg appeared in his dream and related to him how the kafan-chor had not kept his promise and had come and dug up the grave and how he was about to snatch the kafan when he caught his hand. However, the shock was too much for the kafan-chor and he died. At the moment the kafan-chor was lying dead in the qabr. The muríd should please come and remove him and bury him. The muríd was very perturbed and, in the dream, he asked the buzurg: "Hadhrat! What will happen to the kafan-chor now?" The buzurg replied: "Seeing his hand is in mine, I will intercede for him on the Day of Qiyámat!"

Yes, those who are muttaqí will be of service here and over there in the ákhirat as well.

All this came up when we were discussing whom we should meet and whom we should not. Right in the beginning we had stated that nisbat is a very important thing.

Conclusion

The time of Maghrib is close. In conclusion, dear brothers, let me reiterate: This "Majlis" – "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen" – has nisbat with Hadhrat Hakímul-Ummat Mauláná Thánwí رحمة الله عليه. And whosoever is even slightly connected to Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه, he will definitely be connected to the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen". Should such a person not have a connection with this majlis and with related affairs, then this is beyond understanding.

We make du'á that Alláh Ta'álá blesses us, with ikhlás and istiqámat, with the taufíq to perform the work of Dín and cause the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen" to progress.

اٰمِيْن ثُمَّ اٰمِيْن يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

A LETTER CONCERNING NISBAT

[Hereunder follows a translation of a letter written by Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه on the topic of "Nisbat m'Alláh". The letter appears in a booklet called "Maktoobáte-Thaláthah," printed by the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen – Pakistan."]

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ

اَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللهَ كَاَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَاِنَّهٗ يَرَاكَ

That you worship Alláh as if you see Him; and if you are unable to see Him (know well) that He sees you!

My siddíq sádiq friend and mukhlis bandah:

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهٗ

Dear friend, to attain nisbat is fardh. And to attain the know-how (knowledge) of the methodology of attaining what is fardh is also fardh. Therefore, it is necessary that one comes to know the reality of what nisbat is and what the methodology is of attaining nisbat. For this reason, whatever has reached me from my pír and murshid, Álá-Hadhrat, Hakímul-Ummat, nawwaral-Alláhu-marqadahú, I present to you.

The reality of nisbat

The meaning of nisbat is ta'alluq and lagao (connection and attachment.) By this is meant the special connection that the bandah has with Alláh Ta'álá. This ta'alluq is one based on qabúl (acceptance by Alláh Ta'álá) and ridhá (the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá), as one would see between an obedient and submissive lover and a faithful and loyal beloved. Thus, it is apparent that a fásiq and a káfir cannot become a sáhibe-nisbat (one who has attained nisbat.)

Signs of nisbat

The signs of nisbat are these that when one is in the company of a sáhibe-

nisbat the effect is that of a forceful attraction towards the ákhirat and a distaste and repulsion for dunyá; and díndár people incline more towards this person relative to worldly people.

Fruits (effects) of nisbat-m'Alláh

The person's ta'alluq is basically and intrinsically only with Alláh Ta'álá; and intrinsically with nothing else. When the ta'alluq is not with anything except Alláh Ta'álá then, when any item is lost, then there will also be no special anxiety or disquietude.

Pre-condition for attainment of nisbat

A pre-condition is to have kámil ridhá-e-Haqq – the complete pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá. Isolated or independent occasions of ridhá are not sufficient. Independent episodes of ridhá are accrued on every good act: If a mu'min is involved in a sinful act and, thereafter, is involved in some act of obedience – namáz, and so forth – then he will be inviting displeasure because of the sin he committed, but he will also gain ridhá because of the namáz, and so forth, which are acts of obedience and 'ibádat. In the same way, in evil acts and in good acts, he will attain displeasure and ridhá respectively, each on its appropriate occasion (which are signs of the phase of nafse lowwámah), but this type of situation does not entitle the person to be a recipient of nisbat. However, the pre-condition for attaining nisbat is ridhá-e-tám – continuous and complete pleasure (of Alláh Ta'álá).

The example of incomplete ridhá

The example of ridhá ná-tám (incomplete pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá) is like that of an ill person who experiences a temporary reduction and alleviation of his illness. This is a blessing for him, but one would not say that he has attained complete good health. In the same way, the combination of the occasional acts of obedience with acts of sinning cannot be termed nisbat m'Alláh. Therefore, In order to be an aspirant and applicant for the attainment of nisbat, the specific procedure that will bring about ridhá-e-tám, which is a pre-condition for attaining nisbat, will have to be followed.

Details of this procedure for attaining nisbat

Knowledge of Dín (’ilme Dín) has to be acquired to the degree of necessity. Thereafter, firstly, perform two rakats of taubah namáz.

Then undertake the isláh of one’s záhirí amal and one’s bátiní a’mál, with forceful coercion of one’s nafs. Give special attention to the isláh of the bátiní character, which is of extreme importance and which is more difficult.

One should vigilantly and assiduously be constant and punctual (with this programme) for a sufficiently long period, until a stage is reached when these a’mále-záhirah and bátinah become a hál – become part of one’s disposition – that one performs these a’mál with ease. When these have become embedded and established firmly, it is termed as having reached a maqám.

All the azkár, ashghál, muráqabát, mujáhadát and riyádhát that are prescribed are to achieve this stage of ease. But the basic objective is the isláh of the a’mále-záhirah and bátinah. It is on this isláh that nisbate-haqíqí is dependent.

When the mu’min bandah is constant and punctual with his a’mále-záhirah and bátinah, then Haqq Ta’álá has a continual and permanent ta’alluq of ridhá with him.

That is it! This is the reality of nisbat m’Alláh!

Azíze-min – my dear friend! Mere constancy and punctuality with zikr, or constant awareness (hudhúr), or remembrance (yád-dásht) by a process of training and exercising, without isláh a’mále-záhirah and bátinah, is not the reality of nisbat. However, the above, together with constancy in the isláh of the a’mále-záhirah and bátinah, are very helpful and supportive in attaining nisbat. The reason is, azíze-min, that whoever has the thought of Haqq Ta’álá within him all the time, for him to be disobedient to Alláh Ta’álá is very unlikely.

In essence

Thus, the reality of nisbat is this, that Haqq Ta’álá develops a special ta’alluq of ridhá with the bandah, and this is dependent on the isláh of a’mále-sálehah, both záhirah and bátinah.

The distinctive feature of nisbat

The distinctive feature of nisbat is a special injizáb (absorption), which has, as its necessary consequence, by the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá, ease in obedience (tá'at) and worship (ibádat), constancy with zikr and constant awareness (hudhúr).

Baqá (permanence) of nisbat

Azíze-min – my dear friend! This is that nisbat m'Alláh which, in the normal course of events, does not ever decline or fade away, just as that situation that when a person becomes báligh (pubertal), he does not revert to pre-puberty. This is that stage which the súfíyá-karam have expressed as faná: الْفَانِيْ لَا يُرَدُّ– On one who has attained the stage of faná does not ever become a reprobate.

Incidental lapse into sin

My sádiq friend! Do not let the following suspicion enter your mind: Even after attainment and establishment of nisbat some sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم and auliyá-Alláh have been involved in sin, so how can they be still deserving of ridhá-e-iláhí and how can nisbat m'Alláh still exist?

Azíze-min! Such occasional or incidental lapses are neither contrary to permanence of ridhá, nor do they cancel nisbat m'Alláh. Understand very well, that even after having developed a very intense and profound friendship, there may still occasionally arise tiffs and temporary estrangements between friends. However, after reconciliation the same deep and profound friendship is re-established. In actual fact, even during the period of estrangement and displeasure, that same friendship still exists in its customary position and it does not decline. The estrangement and displeasure were merely temporary.

Understand the above very well and embed it in your heart.

An illustration of temporary lapse

Understand it as follows: When an ill person has attained complete good health, it does not necessarily follow that he will never develop a cold even. If it happens that he occasionally lapses into a dietary indiscretion,

will he not suffer some harm? Definitely he will! However, this will only be temporary. After correcting himself and compensating for the indiscretion, that same condition of good health will return.

Another example: Understand that an álim, after he has qualified, despite the fact that he had achieved distinctions in his studies and had developed great scholarly capabilities, will he never get stuck at any particular point? Obviously, occasionally he may falter somewhere, but by directing his attention to the problem, he will remove it.

Understand this very well.

It follows that a wásil-bi-Haqq sáhibe-nisbat, if he lapses incidentally into some sin, that this is neither contrary to permanent ridhá, nor does it cancel nisbat m'Alláh.

May Alláh Ta'álá bless my respected friend with permanent ridhá and real nisbat.

وَالسَّلَامُ

BOOKLET NUMBER ELEVEN

Jamádul-Ukhrá 1420– October 1999

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

Alhamdulilláh, through the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our Sheikh, this eleventh booklet in the series "For Friends" is ready.

Having this issue of "For Friends Number Eleven" in one's hands, it is a most appropriate time to re-assess one's priorities and perspectives:

Looking back, from the time Booklet Number One was read, have one's objectives been achieved? Has there been any progress? At least, has there been some benefit? In order to make it easy to answer these questions, some of the objectives for compiling this series need to be listed:

Firstly: If one has created a ta'alluq (a connection) with a sheikh-e-kámil and one is now following a programme of isláh, then one has progressed to the desired extent.

Secondly: If the above has not been achieved, but by reading these booklets one has made significant changes to one's life, then too one has benefited, but not necessarily to the maximum.

Thirdly: Even if there have been no changes made to one's worldly or Díní life, yet one now knows what is Haqq and what is bátil, then too, one has benefited. One's ímán will remain intact by adhering to what is Haqq.

Fourthly: One is reading merely for the pleasure of the qissas related: "I really enjoyed the qissas Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه related!" Then too this is not without benefit. Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه said that at the appropriate time these qissas, or anything that has been read, in-shá-Alláh will come to the fore and will be of use. However, the question to be answered is: Has one benefited to the maximum? If all four objectives have been realised, then the answer will be yes. If not, then it is necessary to re-assess one's intentions and re-exert oneself in the right direction.

At this point it is important to be aware of the traps laid by Shaitán: Our Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه pointed out that many people will remark: "Where

are there any mashá'ikh like Junaid, Shiblí and the rest?" They Therefore, do not turn to the present-day mashá'ikh for their isláh. Pointing out the fallacy of this argument, our Hadhrat رحمة الله عليه said that an ill person wanting a cure for his illness will turn to the physicians available at the time, and he will not endure the suffering brought on by his illness, wistfully longing for the great physicians of previous times. In fact one sees how, at the scene of an accident, the injured are only too glad to get help from others, whether the persons are qualified doctors or whether they just have some first aid experience only! The sálik should do the same and turn to those who are qualified in the field of isláh, of whom there a number of individuals present at any given time. Of course, one has to search for the right sheikh-e-kámil.

A second strategy of Shaitán is to put the waswasah into a person's mind that he is a hypocrite. "Don't expect me to be like that – I don't want to appear pious when I know I am not. I don't want to be a hypocrite!" This is an argument one hears repeated time and again. This person is actually stating that he does not want to be a proper Muslim, because then he would be a hypocrite! He does not want to be spiritually sound and healthy because then he would be a hypocrite! Can one imagine a sick person telling the doctor: "Doctor, I know that you have promised that I will be cured of my illnesses if I take the necessary treatment, but I know I am an ill person, so do not expect me to take the treatment and become healthy, because then I would be a hypocrite!"? The ludicrousness of this statement is self-evident.

The booklets previously published in this series contain enough material for the sincere sálik to reach his destination. Also, alhamdulilláh, there is sufficient Díní literature available in English on a variety of topics. The aim of carrying on with this series is not merely to add another booklet to the list of literature available, but the aim is to stimulate and motivate the sincere sálik to greater effort in his striving to attain qurbe-Iláhí and nisbat-m'Alláh. Those already treading the path will also benefit.

May Alláh Ta'álá grant these blessings of qurbe-Iláhí and nisbat-m'Alláh to this humble servant, as well as to all the readers. Dr.I.M.

[The majlis that has been translated in this number was held in Jalálábád, India, by Hadhrat Mauláná Masíhulláh Khán Sahib رحمة الله عليه on the 15th Jamádi-ul-Ákhir 1409, corresponding to the 24th January 1989.]

DIL-JO'Í – MAKING HEARTS HAPPY

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

It has been stated in the Hadíth Sharíf that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has said:

اَحَبُّ اَلْاَعْمَالِ اِلَى اللهِ تَعَالٰى بَعْدَالْفَرَائِضِ اِدْخَالُ السُّرُوْرِفِيْ قلبِ الْمُسْلِمِ

As far as Alláh Ta'álá is concerned, after the performance of fará'idh, the best loved act is that which makes a Muslim brother happy (provided that he himself suffers no harm).

An important principle: bring cheer to another

At times, provided that there is no worldly or Díní harm, to perform a certain task that will bring joy, bring cheer to another, bring pleasure to the person and make him happy as an act of kindness, is also an usúl, a principle. This is also one type of order among other orders as far as the ahlulláh are concerned. And whosoever does so is from the ahlulláh!

An incident concerning Hajísáhib having guests from Rámpúr

Hadhratwálá (Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه) related the following incident to us in his majlis: Some folk from Rámpúr and surrounding areas went to perform hajj. While there they went to visit and meet Hajísáhib, (i.e. Hají Imdádulláh sáhib رحمة الله عليه) as Hajísáhib was also (originally) from Rámpúr. When one is in a foreign country and one meets somebody from one's own country and this person is also from one's hometown and, on top of that, it is some relative and, moreover, a very close relative – for example, without prior notification one's son or brother pitches up – and one meets him, then how great will not one's happiness be! How much will one not enquire about his health and welfare, about the well-being of relatives, of acquaintances and of the people in the neighbourhood! This is part of a human being's natural disposition of empathy.

So, these people from Rámpúr arrived at Hajísáhib's رحمة الله عليه place and met him. They made salám, musáfahah and got involved in inquiring about one another's health, the health of friends, the conditions prevailing back home and in this way, the conversation carried on and on.

When about to take leave, these people commented to Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه concerning their visiting him: "Hadhrat, we have wasted so much of your time! You could have been making 'Alláh! Alláh!' – making the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá, making 'ibádat, and you could have kept yourself occupied and busy with your shaghl. That is your normal practice. By our coming here, we have obstructed you!" This is the normal habit of asking for forgiveness at the end.

Apologising unnecessarily is a superfluous custom

It has become a baseless custom for some people to apologise in this way, and it sometimes happens that inappropriate remarks are made without there being any necessity for it. In the same way, some write in their letters to me, or in their isláhí notebooks: "If I have written anything contrary to proper etiquette please forgive me." My reply to this is: "This statement is superfluous. My heart is clean."

Before writing (or speaking) one should take care to have full control over one's pen (or one's tongue) and when one writes with vigilance (or when one speaks having pondered first and understood properly), then why should the necessity arise for apologising?

A misconception that only zikr is 'ibádat

To carry on: When these folk apologised, our Dádá-pír, Hají Imdádulláh sáhib رحمة الله عليه replied: "Is that so? To keep oneself occupied with zikr, this is 'ibádat? And to sit with one's friends and to converse with them in order to bring happiness to their hearts, is this not ibádat?" This our Hadhratwálá رحمة الله عليه related to us. "Is it correct that to be engaged only in zikrulláh – what people commonly recognise as zikrulláh – is 'ibádat? And to sit with one's friends to bring cheer to their hearts and to make them happy by talking to them, is this also not ibádat?"

Just see: In his era, exactly who was Hají Imdádulláh sáhib رحمة الله عليه?

Ask the giants, those august personages recognised as "Qutbul-Irshád" – Hadhrat Mauláná Rashid Ahmed Gangohí Sáhib; "Hujjatul-Islám," Hadhrat Mauláná Qásim Nánotwí Sáhib and "Hakímul-Ummat Mujaddidul-Ummat," Hadhrat Mauláná Ashraf 'Alí رحمة الله عليه. Ask these giants who was Hajísáhib رحمة الله عليه and what his qualities were!

Sunnat-e-Rasúl صلى الله عليه وسلم

Do you understand? This method is in accordance with the sunnat of Nabí-e- Karím صلى الله عليه وسلم. We belong to his ummat, so it is him that we refer to. So much so that there is a narration of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم:

خَالِقُواالنَّاسَ بِاَخْلاَقِهِمْ

Conduct yourself with people according to their character and habits.

The teaching in this statement is that, in one's permissible social conduct, one should take into consideration the temperaments of one's friends, so that the one friend should not feel anxious or be in dread of the other.

The following is narrated in the Hadíth Sharíf: In Rasúlulláh's صلى الله عليه وسلم majális, tales of olden times were also related. The sahábah kirám رضى الله تعالى عنهم used to relate their experiences of the days of Ignorance (Jahálat) and Huzúr صلى الله عليه وسلم used to listen silently.

Once, a sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه was relating some episode from the days of Jahálat. It so happened that the majlis sharíf ended before he could finish his tale. The next day, on the occasion of the majlis, that same sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه was also present and Huzúr صلى الله عليه وسلم remarked: "That incident that you were relating was left incomplete. What happened subsequently?"

It may be that my voice is not reaching you. Are you able to hear me, brothers?

[A loud "Yes!" was the response from those present. Hadhratjí رحمة الله عليه *then continued:]*

I am merely trying to point out to you what the comprehensive qualities of the Alláh-wálá are. If some foolish and ignorant persons were to hear such talks taking place at a buzurg's place, then they will remark: "We have come to listen to some other topics. The talks here are about agriculture,

about the price of goods, about kilos of wheat: 'Brother, what is the price of wheat these days?' " They then get up and walk away. One does not know what concepts they had before coming to the buzurg, and with what muhabbat and 'aqídat they had come.

Testing the faith and confidence of the sálik

Oho! Their examination has been taken! It is for this reason that, suddenly, such topics will come to the fore and such persons are automatically tested, to see how firm their 'aqídat is. They came professing tremendous muhabbat and tremendous 'aqídat. But they walk out commenting: "We have come to listen to other topics. The talks here are about agriculture and business!"

It is also Sunnat-e-Iláhí

Let us progress further. This is for those who have correct 'aqídat and correct i'tiqád and i'timád with regard to their sheikh! We can state that this type of discussions are also Sunnat-e-Iláhí – the practice of Alláh Ta'álá. Just see: are there not references made to commerce in the Qur'án Sharíf? And see also, are there not references made to agriculture in the Qur'án Sharíf? Is there not mention of trades and skills?

وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ

It was not their hands that made this. (S.36.35.)

One will find mention made of animals:

وَذَلَّلْنٰهَا لَهُمْ

And have subdued them [i.e. animals] for their use. (S.36.72.)

These áyát appear in the Qur'án Sharíf.

Mention is also made of incidents of previous ages and the people of previous ages: mention of Fir'oun, mention of Qárún, mention of the tribes of Thamúd and of Ád; mention of the Companions of the Elephants (Asháb-e-fíl). After all, these are commentaries of the Age of Jahálat! And then, finally, Alláh Ta'álá states by way of a lesson for us to take heed: "Just see

what type of people were these! I have described the Age of Jahálat, I have narrated to you the conditions of the people of previous times and I have mentioned the manner in which I dealt with them, but see how rock-hard their hearts were, how stony-hearted they became, how they became filled with animosity. Seeing their situation, those without ímán should have been filled with fear, taken heed and accepted ímán, and those with ímán should have paid even greater attention to the safeguarding and progress of their ímán."

Increase in ímán & removal of negligence

The ímán of the mu'minín and mukhlisín increased: they had developed fear of Alláh Ta'álá. Their hearts were now kindled. They had come to recognise what the system, the habit, the sunnat of Alláh Ta'álá was. This we saw with the ímán of the mu'minín and sincere sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم, that with an increase in their fear their ímán increased, that they become an embodiment of the áyet:

لِيَزْدَادُوْٓا اِيْمَانًا مَّعَ اِيْمَانِهِمْ ؕ

That they might add faith to their faith. (S.48.4.)

So that their ímán can increase with the initial ímán that they had.

In the same way, the conditions of the Ambiyá علیه السلام and of the pious and kámil obedient mu'min people of previous times, have also been mentioned, as well as the munificent way in which they were accommodated by Haqq Ta'álá, by being showered abundantly with blessings upon blessings, bounties upon bounties, so that those who are mu'minín may feel happy and the ímán of the mu'minín may increase.

The result is, as Alláh Ta'álá Himself has stated in the áyet quoted above, that the ímán that they had, now increased. Therefore, those whose temperaments are congenial, whose understanding is of a noble quality, they will ponder on His blessings and His mercy, they will perceive something more and they will progress further with honour and dignity; and they will avoid anything which is of a corruptive nature. As for those whose temperaments are ignoble, whose hearts are not evil, but whose

hearts are hard, when they hear of what happened to past nations and how Záte-Bárí Ta'álá challenged them and punished them, the hardness of their hearts will melt and their hearts will become soft.

Each one ponders: "Is this the system that Haqq Ta'álá follows? Is this His methodology? How long can I persist with my evil ways? How long can I continue with my waywardness? It should not happen that I am suddenly apprehended!"

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ ۝

Lo! The punishment of your Lord is severe. (S.85.12.)

In this way, their hard-heartedness changes into softness.

To continue: Záte-Bárí Ta'álá has related qissas from the days of Jahálat and of previous nations, and the manner in which He dealt with the two groups mentioned above, so that the ummat of His Mehbúb (i.e. the Muslim ummat of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم) would take lessons from these incidents. Those mu'minín Muslims who have lapsed into negligence, may remove their negligence thereby; and those who have an awareness and concern of the hereafter, and have already entered the phase of obedience, that their obedience may increase even more thereby. Also, these incidents have not been mentioned just once in the Qur'án Sharíf, but they have been mentioned several times, in varying tone's and in different chapters.

Do you understand?

To continue: Various topics were discussed in the majális of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم.. However, those filled with animosity would try to corrupt the plain and simple Musalmán sahábah رضی اللہ تعالی عنهم. Once they were outside, they used to say: "We do not know what was being said. We fail to understand what he said and why he said it." These people were, in all appearances, considered to be among the important people of the precincts of Makkah.

They were the so-called intellectuals and intelligentsia. They would argue: "If the talk had any sense in it, if it warranted being understood, then – seeing people of our calibre of intelligence could not understand it – what are the chances that these simple-minded poor folk sitting there

would understand?"

This was the stratagem used to mislead others. This was the ploy to seduce the simple and straight-forward folk. All this is also mentioned in the Qur'án Sharíf.

However, these very simple and straight-forward folk, after they had stayed with obedience in the service of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, finally turned out to be people with great minds! Their understanding and insight became so deep, their temperaments became so highly attuned and tranquil, that all those who had considered themselves to be great intellectuals, far above others, all came to be proven to be complete and utter fools.

This discourse is meant for those mu'minín, sincere seekers, who desire an increase in their ímán, and progress in their bátin and their obedience, with an accompaniment of concern for the ákhirat within themselves. These incidents are meant for them, that they will heed the lessons contained in them and discard their previous ways and, having knowingly chosen this route, henceforth adopt good ways and choose these new ways in a firm and well-grounded manner. It is stated in the Qur'án Sharíf:

قُلْ هٰـذِهٖ سَبِيْلِيْٓ اَدْعُوْٓا اِلَى اللهِ ۣ عَلٰى بَصِيْرَةٍ اَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِيْ ۭ وَسُبْحٰنَ اللهِ

Say: This is my Way: I call on Alláh with sure knowledge,
(on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes),
I and whosoever follows me. Glory be to Alláh! (S.12.108.)

Basháshat of ímán

This results in the basháshat (joy/exhilaration) of ímán coming into their hearts, and when the basháshat of ímán enters the heart, then ímán continues to increase, and there is no question of it decreasing. This was testified to by none other than the non-Muslim Christian king Heraclius.

The incident referred to appears in Bukhárí Sharíf and, briefly, is as follows: At the time that the letter from Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم with the invitation for him to embrace Islám was received by Heraclius, Abú Sufyán and others were also in the same country. At this stage, Abú Sufyán had as yet not accepted Islám, and he and his group had come there merely to trade. Having received the letter from Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم and knowing

as well of the presence of the Makkans, Heraclius summoned Abú Sufyán and read out the letter. He then proceeded to find out more details about the Muslims. Among several other questions put to Abú Sufyán, he was also asked as to those who entered into Islám, did they progress or did they retrogress? Bear in mind that, at the time, Abú Sufyán had not brought ímán. He replied that they progressed.

So, Heraclius, despite being a Christian king, a non-Muslim, testified to this, that it is the demand of the basháshat of those with ímán that, when basháshat enters ímán, then those with ímán progress and they do not retrogress. Heraclius himself was very well informed of his own Christian religion in order to have made this observation. This is exactly what Alláh Ta'álá has stated in the Qur'án Sharíf in the áyet quoted previously: In answer to the question: "What is the benefit of these a'mál, what are the effects?" It is stated that these are the bases for an increase and progress of their ímán.

One should not laugh aloud

To continue: The sahábah رضی الله تعالی عنهم used to mention incidents from the days of Jahálat in the court of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم. Whenever an episode was not completed Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم himself used to remind the narrator: "What was that incident? Just complete it."

If there was any humour in the narrative, Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم used to smile as well. But he never laughed out loud. The Arabic word is "qahqahah" – to laugh loudly; bursting into laughter; roar with laughter. One should not laugh loudly. As far as possible, one should stifle such laughter. And as for the ahle-'ilm – the scholars of Dín – to laugh loudly is contrary to their honour and dignity. However, if one does laugh out loud incidentally, it is not mamnú' (forbidden).

Similarly, if involuntarily it should happen, then also it is not forbidden. But to deliberately laugh loudly, as is practised among the common people, is completely contrary to the shán of tulebá and 'ulemá. That Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم laughed out loudly (qahqahah) is not proven anywhere, but dhahak is proven. "Dhahak" means "to laugh." – to laugh just sufficiently loudly that those nearby hear it. This is dhahak. It is stated in "*Sharah Tahzíb*":

اَلْاِنْسَانُ ضَحَّاكٌ بِالطَّبْعِ

It is the nature of man (that if there is any amazing humorous occurrence) he tends to laugh.

It has also been proven that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had laughed in this manner (dhahak), although it was only twice. It was not his habit to laugh, but, nevertheless, it has been narrated that he did. Therefore, if any álim were to laugh it would not be contrary to the sunnat. These are Díní masá'il mentioned incidentally in-between.

Rasúlulláh's صلى الله عليه وسلم khauf

The reason was the fear that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had. The du'á that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم made was:

وَاجْعَلْ خَشْيَتَكَ اَخْوَفَ اْلاَشْيَاءِعِنْدِيْ

O Alláh! Make Your fear and dread dominant in me,

greater than anything else!

Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is saying: "Grant me such fear, such tremendous fear of You that nobody else in the whole world can experience." This is the result of ma'rifat-Iláhí – having gnosis of Alláh Ta'álá. As one's ma'rifat-Iláhí increases – as one's knowledge of Alláh Ta'álá increases – to that degree does the condition of the heart also becomes imbued with colours, and also becomes firm. I do not wish to comment further. Having made this statement I do not wish to state anything further as to the manner of the heart being coloured with splendid hues and firmness.

However, it has been established that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had tremendous khauf. The lesson to take is this, that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم could bear that degree of fear. He could in no way transgress the limits. In no way could he move away from equilibrium. However, the Muslim ummat could not bear such khauf. Therefore, the limits of fear were also set out, as appears in a du'á at another place:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ مَاتَحُوْلُ بِهٖ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَ مَعَاصِيْكَ

I seek that much of khauf of You that it is a barrier between myself and the

commission of sins against You.

That is: “I desire that much khauf from You, that it forms a barrier between me and sins being committed against You; that I do not perform any act or any deed, anything whatsoever, contrary to Your orders.”

Over there, the request was for “akhwafal ashyá” (extreme fear) and over here, the request is for fear within certain limits. Therefore, for the general mu’minín populace, that amount of fear is sufficient that they do not do anything contrary to the orders of Haqq Ta’álá. That is enough.

Two methods of correction

So, Záte Bárí Ta’álá has related two types of qissas in the Qur’án Sharíf: One is of those whose hearts are of a certain type who will be affected to that degree, and they will abstain from sinning and they will draw towards obedience (tá’at). Another type of qissah is of those whose hearts are of the other type, and they are already in obedience and they will be those who will progress in their tá’at (obedience).

Some are such that their hearts will be seasoned and primed by mention of the showering of blessings and they will bend and submit towards obedience. Others’ hearts are such that, by the mention of punishment and wrath on wrongdoing, their hearts will soften and be drawn towards obedience. In essence, Záte Bárí Ta’álá’s purpose is to save one from contrary actions and persistence therein, and to draw and bind one to obedience.

Take this example: A father sees his child doing wrong. At times, he puts fear into him; at times, he uses harsh words; at times, he threatens him; at times, he relates to him incidents of how others came to suffer harm and injury, trying to get him to bring into focus some concern. What is the purpose of all this? The purpose is that he should save himself from evil; save himself from being corrupted; save himself from situations of harm and disgrace; save himself from injury; save himself from sitting in the company of undesirable persons.

On the other hand, take another child who is also doing wrong: the father speaks to him with softness, with affection, with love, that he should save himself from wrongdoing. This child’s temperament is such that he will

heed this approach. The father's purpose is the same in this case as well, that he should save himself from wrong; he should abstain from evil; he should avoid situations of shame and disgrace; that he should rather veer to avenues of good and of benefit and honour.

In both cases the purpose is the same, at times, using stern expressions and harsh words; and, at times, using tones of affection and love.

In the same way Záte Bárí Ta'álá sets forth in the Qur'án Sharíf blessings of the highest order. In mentioning these ne'mats (blessings) He uses amazing tonalities in Súrah Ar-Rahmán:

فَبِأَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ۚ

Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? (S.55.63)

Then a very short áyet is narrated:

مُدْهَآمَّتَانِ ۚ

Dark green with foliage. (S.55.64.)

Thereafter, He asks again, as if to say: "Which of My ne'mats are you going to deny? Ponder a bit and see in what different ways I am trying to explain to you!" Just see in what amazingly loving tones these statements are set forth! Áh!

Alláh Ta'álá's love & compassion

At a different place Alláh Ta'álá states, (in Surah 43.5):

أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِيْنَ ۝

Shall We turn this Book away from you because you are a wanton folk?

As if to say: "Oh dear! You have debased yourself somewhat. So, shall We stop advising you?" Just see how lovingly it is put! That individual with a soft heart, one who has even the slightest spark of muhabbat for Záte Bárí Ta'álá, should break down into tears on hearing this. Or should he not? How excellent is not Your mercy! How excellent is not Your affection! Wáh! Wáh! How much hope is He not instilling!

Just ponder on what Haqq Ta'álá is saying: "So, shall We stop advising

you? How can that happen when, in actual fact, I have created you? Now then, just look at yourself, what have you turned yourself into? But, despite My admonitions, why are you not taking heed and why are you not turning towards good? No matter how much you have dropped below the boundaries, should I stop giving you advice? That will not happen! From here onwards, you look at yourself: To what degree do you have sensibility within yourself? You gauge for yourself. I am pulling you towards Me. I am giving you nasíhat." "Nasíhat", implying "having your welfare at heart".

Are you listening or not? Ponder on this!

Then again Alláh Ta'álá has made an amazing statement, a very endearing statement, full of compassion. These are statements meant for those who have living hearts. We are all mu'min sitting here, and which mu'min is such that he does not possess a living heart? Yes, it is a different matter that there are differences between one heart and another, one being very soft and another not so soft. It can never be that a mu'min's heart is like stone, and it should also never be so!

At a different place Haqq Ta'álá states *(S.4.147.)*:

مَّا يَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَ اٰمَنْتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيْمًا ۝

What can Alláh gain by your punishment if you are grateful and you believe? Verily, it is Alláh that appreciates (all good) and knows all things.

Have you pondered? This is a very enchanting statement – a very enrapturing statement; a statement to set the heart aflame; a touching statement to melt the heart! What an amazing tone has been used:

مَّا يَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ

O dear! What will Alláh Ta'álá gain by punishing you? What an endearing statement! Are you listening?

مَّا يَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ

What will Alláh Ta'álá gain by punishing you? It is such that it causes the heart to weep! Tears may or may not gush from one's eyes, but the heart weeps! What will Alláh Ta'álá gain by punishing you? What will it benefit Alláh Ta'álá to cause you grief? What will He gain by beating you? How will

He benefit by causing you injury or harm? What, will there be an increase in the grandeur of Alláh Ta'álá, as we see with important worldly people?

What happens with important worldly people is that somebody utters something that offends them. Arrogantly, they command: "Bring the culprit here!" He is brought forth. "Beat him up! Bash him up!"

So this Big Shot sáhib's honour has risen! He has vanquished a poor, weak man and made an impression. Yes, he is a man of great strength! He is a man of power! He is a man of influence! His esteem has gone up! In hushed tone's people would whisper to one another: "Never mind this poor wretch, even the Thanedár (Chief Police Inspector) would be dealt with in this way." And mind you, it was no small feat for the Thanedár to be given a beating. That was in the old days. You are still children, too young to have seen those days.

However, Alláh Ta'álá states: "What will I gain by punishing you, by causing droughts, by causing you taklíf, by causing you sorrow? Will My honour and grandeur increase thereby? My honour and grandeur is as it was. There is no question of increase and decrease, of becoming more or getting less." Alláh Ta'álá is not such that His qualities increase or decrease, that they rise and decline, that they ascend and descend in status, that His superiority can wax and wane. Dear brother, Alláh Ta'álá is not like that. This is an absolute principle that He is not like that. And when He is not like that, then think for yourself:

مَّا يَفْعَلُ اللهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ

What can Alláh Ta'álá gain by your punishment?

However, if you wish to summon punishment onto yourself, then that is your affair! In any case, this is a most beautiful áyet, is it not?

Dear brethren, one's gaze should fall on all the áyát whenever one recites the Qur'án Sharíf. So, in conjunction with this one, take the following: Alláh Ta'álá is saying: "I have already stated to you:

كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ۙ

Your Lord has ordained mercy for Himself. (S.6.54.)

Subtleties of Qur'ánic language

Áh! Just see! Over here the word "Rabb" has been used, whereas over there the word "Alláh" has been used. The niceties and implications only the linguist, the expert in rhetoric, will appreciate – the subtle change in nuance slipped in unobtrusively occasioned by using the word "Rabb" here and the word "Alláh" over there!

This is the reason why the linguists and literary experts of those days threw down their weapons in defeat and admitted that the words of the Qur'án Sharíf can never be the words of a human being. You may have read or heard of *"Sab'ah Mu'allaqah" [The Seven Suspended]*. What used to happen was that from every region of Arabia, the greatest poets, experts in the sciences of eloquence and rhetoric, and highly qualified in the art of Arabic poetry, composed highly intricate and eloquent verses. A poet would hang up his written qasídah in the Ka'bah. Others would then scrutinise this qasídah. Somebody else would compose something better and lower the first qasídah and suspend his above it. A third poet would compose something even more eloquent and suspend his qasídah right on top. In this way, seven qasídas were suspended on the Ka'bah, hence the name given to these as *"The Seven Suspended"*. This was in the Age of Jáhiliyah.

However, when these very poets heard the Qur'án Sharíf they confessed: "It is quite obvious that this Qur'án is the Word of Alláh – the Kalámulláh! It can never be the word of any human being!" From then onwards the custom of hanging up qasídas of poets on the Ka'bah came to an end.

The Jinnát also testified to the Qur'án Sharíf being the Word of Alláh Ta'álá: Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was making Fajr salát when the Jinnát arrived on the scene and stood listening. Merely by listening they brought ímán. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم did not even have to extend an invitation to them to accept ímán! They attested: "This is the Kalámulláh! It can never be the words of any human being!"

To continue: Haqq Ta'álá is saying that He has already stated to you:

كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ۙ

Your Lord has ordained mercy for Himself. (S.6.54.)

Your Rabb, your Nourisher and Sustainer, has made it compulsory on Himself to be merciful.

Is this not beautifully put? "Therefore, conclude from this, can I ever cause you any difficulty, or punish you unnecessarily? Yes, if you wish for punishment, if your attitude is that you will not reform without My punishment befalling you, that you will not mend your ways without being beaten, then that is your affair!" Does a loving father like beating his child without a good reason? He will explain to him time and again and try to make him understand, but if the child does not take heed, then he will beat him to correct him. Obviously he will not beat him out of pleasure! And – Alláh Ta'álá forbid! – if he were unintentionally to strike him in such a way that the stick wounds the child, immediately the father will feel remorseful.

He will get the doctor to attend to him. He will see to his treatment. If it was his purpose to cause injury, why call the doctor? Why do tears stream from his eyes? The blow was not intentional, but accidental. He is now regretful. If this is the condition of the father, the rabb-e-majázi – the father is referred to as the figurative or substitute nourisher – then will Záte Bárí Ta'álá send down punishment for no reason? But if you want punishment to descend, then it is your affair. Alláh Ta'álá is stating: "I have already stated that from My side I have made it incumbent upon Myself to be merciful. If you wish otherwise, It is your affair. However, there are some among you that, even though punishment descends on you, you are not prepared to believe. So much so, there are even some who may be sent to Jahannam and in Jahannam they will plead: 'Take us out of Jahannam and send us back to the world, then we will bring ímán on You'. If this were to be done and if they were to be taken out of Jahannam and are sent into the world again, then too, they will not bring ímán!" Some are like this. Who can make such people understand?

To continue: Alláh Ta'álá states: "When I have made it incumbent on Myself to show mercy, what will I gain by punishing you?" What will it benefit Alláh Ta'álá by punishing you? What affectionate words! How full of muhabbat are these tone's not!

Alláh Ta'álá continues: If you keep on showing gratitude.

Let us stop to ponder. Ponder over your existence. Who made it possible? These limbs and different parts of the body – who has given them? Out of all the creation no other creation has been given what you, O Insán, has been given!

"The first stage of gratitude is this that you believe in Me as you should believe in My Zát (Being) with the sifát (attributes)." With what beatitude has it not been said!

The short áyet with which I started ,I find most entrancing, absolutely enchanting!

Let us now combine all the áyát: Your Rabb, your nourisher and sustainer, has made it incumbent on Himself to show mercy. Therefore, – it follows according to the laws of logic – what will He gain by punishing you? Will there be an increase in His glory and majesty? And if you keep on living this way, living with gratitude as mu'minín bandas (believing bondsmen), without showing any ingratitude for His ne'mats (blessings), then there will only be mercy upon mercy! The áyet ends:

وَكَانَ اللهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيما

Alláh Ta'álá is ever appreciative of you.

Note that the word "Alláh" appears here and not "Rabb". The term "Alláh" denotes that Being Who is such and such, such and such – that is, all the attributes of perfection are combined in that Being Who is absolutely pure and free of all faults and deficiencies. Despite this absolute perfection He states: "If you are mu'minín and remain as My bandas (bondsmen), then you have a great worth and value with Me.

In the word "'Alíma" we have been shown: "I am well aware of this gratitude of yours and your ímán and ikhlás and the condition of the heart (which is the site of ikhlás). So, why should I not value you? Especially so, when you have effaced from within yourself certain other passions solely out of consideration for Me. You have left off all of these on My saying so and out of consideration for Me. It is in My knowledge that, being a mu'min, you are remaining as a grateful bandah. So, if I do not value you, who else will?

I am One who is highly appreciative." As Alláh Ta'álá states at a different place:

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْاٰ خِرَةَ وَسَعٰى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا

And whoso desires the hereafter and strives for it with the necessary effort, being a believer; for (people like) these their efforts find favour (with their Lord).(S.17.19.)

Indebtedness: saying jazákalláh or shukriah

The pre-requisite of being mu'min has been laid down. "This effort on your part is of great value in My eyes." The words "mashkúr" and "shukr" that is applied to Záte Bárí Ta'álá in the Qur'án Sharíf means "one who values." (On this basis) in our idiom we would say: "We say shukriah to you." This is a phrase used day and night. For example: Somebody gives you an item in sheer happiness. If it is an elder you would say: "Shukriah!" If it is somebody junior to you and he does something agreeing with your tabiyet, you would say: "Jazákalláh!" So, a younger person we will thank by saying: "Jazákalláh! Khairul-Jazá'!" And an elder we would thank by saying: "Shukriah!"

On the other hand, Záte Bárí Ta'álá says to this insignificant insán, this human born of an insignificant drop of sperm, who has brought ímán on Záte Bárí Ta'álá merely by Him saying so, and is now involved in His obedience. What does Haqq Ta'álá say to him, this inferior creation?

In other words: "Shukriah to you!"

Ponder! Think about this! This is pure patronage, otherwise how can an inferior be addressed with "shukriah"? A lesser one should be told "Jazákalláh." However, Záte Bárí Ta'álá is so happy, so happy, at his listening to Him and being obedient to Him, that He says: "You have great value with Me!" This is Sunnate-Iláhí – the system that Alláh Ta'álá follows. "You have made Me happy, Therefore, I will keep you happy!"

Is Alláh Ta'álá indebted to the bandah? Not at all! This is for the benefit of the bandah. Alláh Ta'álá is not indebted to anybody.

Take this illustration again: A father advises the son out of concern for him and the son accepts the advice. Is the father now indebted to the son? Not at all. It is the other way round: the son is indebted to the father for

having advised him for his benefit. Yet the father will say: “Wáh! Wáh! Wáh! Wáh! You have brightened our name! You have erased all the evil of your previous actions.” Nobody will now mention these past activities – or will they?

Take another illustration: Who takes note of a poor person? Nobody. Take a person who was absolutely poverty stricken or destitute, but has now become very wealthy. Those who had no time for him when he was poor will now treat him with respect. He will now be honoured. Those who looked at him with contempt will now be respectful and will be gracious towards him when he visits: “Please do come in. Quickly, bring a chair for our visitor!” Whereas previously when this person was down-and-out and he came, nobody took any notice of him. He had to sit on the floor in one corner.

Ponder. Do such occurrences not take place?

The point is that with an improvement, the previous sorry state is forgotten. This is what Alláh Ta’álá is stating. What loving and affectionate statements is He not making!

How much cheer is He not bringing to the heart! How much encouragement is He not giving! Is He not giving encouragement? What benefit is there for Alláh Ta’álá? Yet, when the bandah has brought ímán and thrown himself into His obedience, then Haqq Ta’álá encourages and spurs him on further, just like a loving and affectionate father.

We can thus conclude that to give encouragement is sunnate-Iláhí. To bring cheer to the heart (dil-jo’í) is sunnate-Iláhí. To spur somebody on is sunnate-Iláhí. To make a person happy is sunnate-Iláhí. Whereas Alláh Ta’álá is not in need of it. Do you understand the point?

The point I was making is that some issues are such that, in appearance, they do not seem to be ibádat. But, what do we know? Yes, those with knowledge will know that these are also part of zikrulláh, that these are also included in ’ibádat.

Attempting and achieving

Can anybody fulfil perfectly and completely those commands that have been given in accordance to the shán of Alláh Ta’álá – in conformity to

His grandeur and majestic status? Never, but never! That order that Alláh Ta'álá has given to be carried out, in the time set for it, in the manner it is to be done, in keeping with the shán of Haqq Ta'álá, can anybody carry out that task to that degree of perfection? Never. However, this person who carries out that task in the set time, yet is unable to do it according to the shán of Záte Bárí Ta'álá, nevertheless, Alláh Ta'álá looks at the effort with a gaze of appreciation: "My bandah has made an effort. Where is he able to do so at the level of My Zát (Being)? Yet, I know that he did it according to his capabilities, weak as he is. He attempted it. Therefore, he is of value and appreciated in My gaze." Therefore, do not fall into too deep research and inquiry, into too deep introspection and mystification, into too deep thought and anxiety.

On the other hand, that day in which you feel that you have performed a task befitting the shán of Alláh Ta'álá that is the day of mourning for you! In other words, it is a day of immense grieving. The very audacity! "O puny bondsman! Do you consider that your performance is at the level of My grandeur and majesty?" Better is that day when you humbly submitted: "This is the extent of my effort. I have tried my level best. Where can I do anything befitting the grandeur and majesty of Haqq Ta'álá?" Where is it possible to do anything befitting the shán of Haqq Ta'álá? Astighfirulláh!

O you brothers! O you sálikún! O you zákirún! O you tálibún! O you mútíyún! Do you understand? This is encouragement – instilling courage for those who have work to do! Have you understood the points made?

A sinner enters a masjid

It comes in the Hadíth Sharíf that when a mu'min bandah sets out to perform his namáz and he reaches the door of the masjid, then the malá'ikah attempt to stop him from entering. The reason being that he had committed some sins previous to this. And sins constitute filth and pollution. Now, how can the malá'ikah allow such a person to enter the masjid, the Royal chamber of Alláh Ta'álá, in this condition? They thus asks Alláh Ta'álá...

To digress a bit: The communication between Alláh Ta'álá and the malá'ikah is instantaneous. An instant also is a time period, but here

there is not even a time period. To illustrate this let us take the wireless (radio). These modern inventions make it easier to explain and understand. How much time does it take to communicate by radio? It is virtually instantaneous. Very early on I was in Pákistán. I had not as yet travelled by plane. Somebody took me to see a plane. When we were there I asked one of the officers: "I have heard that when a plane is flying a person can speak to another person flying in another plane. How does this work?" He said: "Quite right. Wait, I'll show you." He informed somebody of what he was going to do and then placed the earphone set on my head. He reassured me: "Do not worry, Hadhratjí!" There were four or five others standing there. A conversation then took place between the other party and myself. Not even a second's delay. Do you understand? Here there may still be fractions of seconds involved, but communication between Záte Bárí Ta'álá and the malá'ikah does not even involve that much of a delay. This illustration of a wireless has been given merely to make one understand.

To continue: The malá'ikah says: "How can I allow him to present himself in Your Royal chamber in this condition, contaminated with filth as he is?" One is prone to commit some sin or other, a "big" sin or a "small" sin and become besmeared with "big" filth or "small" filth. One's inner condition is known to the malá'ikah. If somebody were to be summoned by the wazír for a social meeting would he go wearing clothes which have stains and blotches? Obviously not. The wazír will see only the external, but Záte Bárí Ta'álá and the malá'ikah know the inner condition as well.

That is why it is written about a person intending entering the toilet: There are malá'ikah with him – these are the Kirámin-kátibín, one on the right side and one on the left side. The one on the right side writes down the nékis (good deeds) and the one on the left writes down the sins. These are the C.I.D.'s, the detectives, who watch over all his actions. If only one can have this awareness all the time it is also an achievement. Sub-hán-Alláh!

That these two malá'ikah are performing the work of C.I.D.'s is referred to in the Qur'án Sharíf in the following áyát:

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَنِ عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيْدٌ ۝مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيْبٌ عَتِيْدٌ ۝

When the two receivers [guardian angels] receive (him), seated on the right hand and on the left, he utters no word, but there is with him an observer ready [to record].(S.50.17-18.)

Therefore, on the day of Qiyámat every atom of good, and every atom of evil that has not been washed off with the waters of taubah, will be presented in one's Book of Deeds (Námah A'mál), as Alláh Ta'álá states at another place:

فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهٗ ۝وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَّرَهٗ ۝

And whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. (S.99.7-8)

Alláh Ta'álá is reminding us, warning us.

Behaviour in the toilet

To continue: It is written that this person now enters the toilet. He thinks that he is now alone in the toilet and that there is nobody else there, because the malá'ikah Kirámin-kátibín do not enter – they remain waiting outside. He now thinks of Alláh Ta'álá just in his heart. Because it is not permissible to make the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá in the toilet with one's tongue, he thought of Alláh Ta'álá, he remembered Him and he made His zikr just in his heart.

On the other hand, if he did not do this, but he thought to himself that there is nobody present. Even the Kirámin-kátibín are not present, so he indulges in some self-enjoyment, playing and stimulating himself. He then comes out thinking that nobody is aware of his self-indulgence. Now, we find there are experts at physiognomy – those who claim to assess a person's character merely by looking at his face – this being so, then how can the Kirámin-Kátibín not know what he did while he was in the toilet?

So, when he leaves the toilet and he had remained in the toilet with nékis, as in the first instance, then the malá'ikah on the right will write

down nékis for him, even though he may not have said anything with his tongue, the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá having been made in his heart. The nékis of the heart are written down. If, on the other hand, he performed some unbecoming and indecent act while in the toilet, the person having the misconception that he is alone and that nobody knows about it, then the malá'ikah on the left will write it down.

Do you understand? If this awareness exists that nothing can be concealed, then jalwat and khalwat are equal. Then being in seclusion or being among others would have the same significance! Is my voice reaching you? Jalwat and khalwat will be the same. Who is there present in the toilet with him? Even though the Kirámin-kátibín are not present in the toilet, yet they write down one's activities. They are such.

To continue: This person is proceeding to the Royal chamber of Alláh Ta'álá i.e. the masjid, when he is stopped from entering by the malá'ikah. The malá'ikah says: "How can I allow him to present himself in Your Royal chamber in this condition, contaminated with filth as he is?" Immediately the order of Alláh Ta'álá is given: "O malá'ikah! Lift up the sins that this person is laden with! Remove the filth that is in him and on top of him!"

Do you see the bounty of Rabbul-Álamín, of that Being Who is our sustainer and our nourisher?

The malá'ikah immediately remove his sins. The person now enters the Royal parlour of Alláh Ta'álá, the masjid, in a pure (pák) condition. This is something to ponder over.

The moment the filth of his evil actions has been lifted from him, he enters and he performs his namáz, in whatever manner. He then departs from the masjid, but the malá'ikah is waiting for him on the outside. He has no option. He then asks Alláh Ta'álá, – this is from Hadíth Sharíf – "The impurity (ná-pákí) which I had lifted from him, shall I settle it on him again?" Haqq Ta'álá replies. "When you have lifted off from him his sins, why burden him again? Throw them away!"

Do you see? Alláh Ta'álá has stated:

كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ۙ

Your Lord has ordained mercy for Himself. (S.6.54.)

Alláh Ta'álá has made it compulsory on Himself to show mercy. Can you see the application of this incumbency? Is this not an act of love and affection? Does it not behove us to sacrifice ourselves on His orders?

Alláh Ta'álá is appreciative

Just see further: We know the poor quality of our deeds. Yet Záte Bárí Ta'álá states: "And Alláh Ta'álá is appreciative and well-knowing of one's deeds:

You have made namáz. You have not performed it with the intention of showing any person. Deliberately you did not make the niyet of showing the people. The niyet was for the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá. So, Alláh Ta'álá knows the condition of the heart, the sincerity, the ikhlás, that the deliberate intention was to please Alláh Ta'álá and not – Alláh forbid! – to show the people. On the other hand, how can he perform any deed the way it should be performed, according to the shán of Alláh Ta'álá? No, never. Despite this, Alláh Ta'álá's attitude is: "Seeing your effort is for Me and not for the creation. And seeing it was done for My sake, if I do not accept who is there to accept? In whatever manner it has been performed, the point is that it has been performed. Therefore, qabúl! Accepted!"

Do you understand, dear brethren?

But, on performing namáz! The above point is valid if one performs namáz. On not performing namáz there is no question of having hopes of acceptance! Therefore, first continue with your effort, then have hope.

So, now when he leaves the masjid he leaves pure – cleansed and clean. Alláh Ta'álá has purified him without him having made the effort himself at purifying himself and He has allocated a servant, a malá'ikah, to cleanse him. So, upon leaving the masjid he needs to have some prudence and sensibility, an awareness of his state of cleanliness. And, especially seeing that he has now even heard this with his own ears, should he now contaminate himself again? He should rather, as far as is possible, take care and be vigilant to safeguard himself from obscenity, from sins, from evil, from flagrant undignified acts and from scandalous and disgraceful acts.

These are aspects that one should sacrifice oneself for – for that person with a sharíf-ut-taba' and a s'Alím-ul-qalb (an honourable nature and a heart that is conducive to accepting goodness). Therefore, now that you have left

the masjid cleansed, keep a close scrutiny on yourself. Keep pondering. Keep on safeguarding your gaze. Keep on restraining your tongue. Keep your ears also curbed. Keep your feet also from being wayward: do not travel to just any old place; do not go to places where acts of disobedience take place; save your footsteps from walking to places of iniquity. Do not deliberately bring evil thoughts into your heart.

Why? The reason is that Alláh Ta'álá has said that we should safeguard our feet, safeguard our ears and safeguard our eyes. It is stated in the Qur'án-e-Pák:

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَـٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ۝

Every act of hearing or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). (S.17.36.)

Places of evil

Furthermore, Alláh Ta'álá states in the Qur'áne Pák:

وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَشْهَدُوْنَ الزُّوْرَ ۙ

And those who do not participate in false activities. (S.25.72.)

It is the shán, the honour and dignity, of a mu'min Muslim that he does not go to places of evil. He does not sit in places of iniquity. Do you understand? This is the dignified and honourable status of a mu'min Muslim. Alláh Ta'álá does not want him to sit in places of evil.

Alláh Ta'álá states further: Never mind sitting in wrong places, but...

وَإِذَا مَرُّوْا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوْا كِرَامًا ۝

When they pass by idle pursuits they pass by with dignity. (S.25.72)

If he were to pass by any evil places, places where people are sitting involved in futile activities, if this mu'min were to pass that way, he proceeds with his eyes cast down, with complete dignity and utmost grace. He passes by in such a manner that it is apparent that he does not look with contempt at those involved in those wrong activities and that he does not consider himself to be superior to them.

Wáh! Wáh! What a splendid statement! Is my voice reaching you or not?

To repeat: When he passes by people involved in futile activities: "marrú kirámá" – he proceeds in a very cultured manner, that by his manner of behaviour there is no sign of him showing any superiority and there is no evidence of him looking with contempt at them and considering himself to be better than them. The mu'min does not even incline towards them. He does not even look at them. Neither does he think himself superior, nor does he consider them inferior. Provided that he is a tálib! So, never mind sitting there – rather he passes by such places. This is the shán of a mu'min Muslim.

Coming back to what I had said initially, that some actions are such that, externally, they do not appear to be zikrulláh, nevertheless, these actions are carried out to encourage others and for their dil-jo'í – to make them happy. In this event they are also included in zikrulláh. They are also acts enjoined by the Sharí'at (mámúr-behí) from among many other acts.

A person's temperament: an important mas'alah

What was the reason for bringing this topic to my lips and mentioning the incident concerning Hají Imdádulláh sáhib رحمة الله عليه? This is something I have not mentioned before, but the purpose is to mention something connected to the tape recorder that has been placed here. Leave it here – I have already given permission previously. However, my tabiyet does not approve of it. In the first instant it jolts me – it causes me an inner agitation. My tabiyet feels ashamed. This does not mean that you should not record. I am merely intimating the condition of my temperament.

What I mean to indicate is that there are certain matters that are not harmful from the dunyáwí (worldly) point of view and they are not harmful from the point of view of the ákhirat (hereafter). The dunyáwí harm would be harm to ján (life and limb), harm to mál (wealth), and harm to ábrú (honour). Harm to honour is considered to be severer than harm to life and limb and to wealth. It is indeed considered a very severe harm. Yes, that person who has no sensitivity to and awareness of disgrace he is no ádmí (human being). So, worldly harm would be bodily harm, material harm

and harm to honour and dignity. What would constitute Díní harm, harm to one's ákhirat? This would be sin (ghunah).

So, in placing the tape recorder here what bodily or material harm is there to me or to my honour? To the contrary, in the eyes and in the thinking of others, it is a means of greater honour. The thoughts running through their minds most probably are as follow: "Oho! Just see how great a personality is Hadhrat! Just see the people listening to him! Also, how attentively are they not listening! And they are even taping his talk! What great worth do they not place on his talks!" Such thinking is a basis of honour and not harm. So, there is no harm in it for me, neither worldly nor in the hereafter.

Any harm to one's hereafter is intolerable. Obedience in such matters is not wájib. A statement of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم states,

وَلَا طَاعَةَ فِيْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللهِ

And do not obey in the transgression of Alláh Ta'álá's orders.

On the other hand, it is also wrong to think that people may say what they like, but we are unconcerned.

Is my voice reaching you?

Hayá – and what people think

Remember! Hayá (a sense of modesty and shame) is a very virtuous quality. The Hadíth Sharíf states:

اَلْحَيَاءُشُعْبَةٌ مِّنَ الْاِيْمَانِ

Hayá is a branch of ímán.

Hayá is a good quality. Insán abstains from a lot of evil because of it. If one's sense of shame were to disappear, then to abstain from evil becomes very difficult. To the extent of one's hayá, one will abstain even from the minutest of evils. Hayá and a sense of shame are great qualities. These are branches of ímán.

Thus, to think: "Arè Mia! People may say what they like, I could not be bothered in the least!" this is not an ádmí (civilised human being). The

reason is that that person who has a conducive temperament, a respectable disposition, will be extremely concerned. Even though he may not be guilty of the actions people attribute to him – he may be uninvolved and completely pák – yet he will be affected. When he comes to know that this type of filthy rumours concerning him have spread from people's lips his temperament will definitely feel aggrieved. He is blameless, nevertheless, he feels hurt when such talks reach his ears. So, that person who thinks to himself: "I could not be bothered in the least!" is no ádmí – he is not one whom we would call respectable and cultured.

I have proof of this. And not only one proof, but many.

Take the case of Ummul-mu'minín Hadhrat Á'ísháh رضی الله تعالی غنها. Was she slandered or not? The incident is mentioned in Súrah Núr. Yet she was innocent, was she not? Yet a hue and cry arose. Hadhrat Á'ísháh رضی الله تعالی غنها herself was unaware of the slander against her. An elderly lady, Hadhrat Umme-Mustah رضی الله تعالی غنها brought her attention to it:

"Do you know something? There is a hue and cry about you. This is the slander levelled against you." Yet, she was innocent. She was chaste. Alláh Ta'álá revealed 10 áyát in the Qur'án Sharíf concerning her chasteness (S.24.11 & following áyát.)

However, by these slanderous statements having come to the lips of the world, what happened to her? When she heard about them she developed a fever, even though she was pure and chaste.

So, a person who thinks: "Ah! Let the people think what they like, I am unconcerned!" is he an ádmí, taking into account that Ummul-mu'minín Hadhrat Á'ísháh رضی الله تعالی غنها who was siddíqah, faqíhah, álimah, ábid'ah, záhidah, árifah, zowjah-mutahharah of Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم was also affected and developed a fever, chaste and pure as she was?

Therefore, It is imperative to save oneself from such situations where people have an opportunity to pass comments. So much so that Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم has stated:

اِتَّقُوْا مَوَاضِعَ التُّهَمِ

(Always) save yourself from situations of slander.

As I was saying: in keeping the tape recorder here there is no Díní or worldly benefit for me. Nevertheless, from the aspect of my disposition I sense it to be shameful and a barrier. However, it does not mean that you should not bring it tomorrow. This I had already clarified earlier. There may be some who may feel: "Oho! Hadhrat's temperament is bashful about the tape recorder. He finds it distasteful. Therefore, we will not bring it tomorrow." The answer I have already given – this is a question of disposition.

In any case, going back to what I was saying initially and had mentioned the situation with Hají Imdádulláh sáhib رحمة الله عليه that he was conversing with others in emulating Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم with passionate love for the sunnat. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has stated that deal with people according to their habits and akhláq. So, whatever type of person presented himself to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم he behaved towards them accordingly. For example, If a farmer came to him, then he would converse about farming; if a merchant came to him he would converse with him along lines of business. There were lessons in these. Every action and statement of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم contained lessons and teachings for us. If our behaviour is according to these criteria, then it is sunnat, otherwise not.

Humour in Islám

For instance: Some sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم enquired...

You have studied Bukhárí Sharíf, in which there is a chapter on "Humour". Shamá'il Tirmizí sharíf also contains these references.

To continue: some sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم asked: "O Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم! You prevent us from being jocular, but you yourself are jocular?" Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم replied: "In my jocularity there is 'ilm and lessons, which are not to be found in your jocularity. That is why I forbid you."

However, when a person also reaches such a comprehensive status of dignity, then he will be an exception to the rule. Occasionally, with the niyet (intention) of sunnat, in order to bring cheer to another's heart – as a means of bringing joy – it would be permissible.

On the other hand, if one's jocularity is the cause of creating discord and enmity and the other person is offended – no matter how great a friend he

may be, but the jocularity is of this nature – he should refrain. He would be committing a sin. We are speaking of making hearts happy, but here his heart is grief-stricken. How can this be bringing cheer to him? How can this be considered to be making him happy? An injury has been caused. That is why Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم stated: "There is a difference between my humour and yours."

If one is not permitted to be a party to jocularity, then – Alláh Ta'álá forbid! Alláh Ta'álá forbid! – how can one ever be a party to others' unnecessary, futile and nonsensical deeds and activities and sinning?

Some instances of jocularity have great lessons in them. An incident comes to mind concerning a sahábí رضى الله تعالى عنه and which is related in Shamá'il Tirmizí Sharíf: The sahábí's رضى الله تعالى عنه name was Záhir. He was a peasant, that is, he lived in a farming area. Occasionally when he came to Madínah Munowwarah he used to bring gifts from the farm to present to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. In reciprocation Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم used to present him also with something. So that whenever he came, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم used to comment: "He is our farm and we are his city."

It so happened that, once, when the sahábí Záhir رضى الله تعالى عنه came to Madínah Munowwarah and was proceeding towards the bazár, Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم also came out of his home and proceeded in the same direction. Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم recognised him, upon which Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم quietly came up to him from behind and laid his hands on his shoulders. Bear in mind that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم had great strength in his arms. The sahábí Záhir رضى الله تعالى عنه did not recognise who it was and asked: "Who are you?" Through the corner of his eyes his gaze fell on the mubárak hands and he realised immediately that it was Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Immediately he stepped backwards with the intention of pressing his back against the mubárak breast of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم with this thought in mind: "When will this opportunity arise again? If my back were to touch the mubárak breast of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم I will possibly be saved from the fire of Jahannam!"

With his hands still on the shoulders of Záhir رضى الله تعالى عنه Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Who is there who will buy this slave?" 'Abdulláh – the bondsman of Alláh; the slave of Alláh. This was in a manner of speaking. Záhir رضى الله

تعالی عنه was not a slave in the Shar'í Sense of the word. But was he not a slave of Alláh Ta'álá – 'Abdulláh? How did Záhir رضی الله تعالی عنه respond?

Is my voice reaching you?

Záhir رضی الله تعالی عنه said: "O Rasúlulláh! That person who is of no use to himself, how can he be of use to others? Who will buy me?" Huzúre-Akram صلی الله علیه وسلم (the sheikh), replied: "That is what you are saying. Ask Alláh and the Rasúl of Alláh صلی الله علیه وسلم of what degree of worth you are, of what great value you are!"

This incident appears, on face value, to be of a humorous nature, but in reality it has great ta'lím (lesson/s; teaching/s) in it. It is proof of ease in methodology. What great and glad tidings are not contained in it! Huzúre-Akram صلی الله علیه وسلم is congratulating him and that he is happy with him. Credence should be placed on this statement.

A mas'alah of Sulúk

From this also is proven the mas'alah concerning the relationship between the sheikh and the muríd. What does the muríd say and what reply does the sheikh give? The sheikh may state: "Mubárak! Congratulations!" By the sheikh's words of comfort there is peace of mind and tranquillity. Therefore, the sálik should not consider the sheikh's ta'lím to be superficial. He should consider it to be truthful and investigated (haqíqí tahqíq), because every statement of the sheikh is based on truth (wáqi'í).

A second aspect should also become quite clear. What is it? This has to be explained. Very briefly: The question arises as to why did Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم place his hands on the shoulders and why did he not place his hands over the eyes, as is the custom here? What we see happening here is that a friend creeps up silently from behind and then clasps his hands over the eyes of the friend to see if he can be recognised: "Tell me who is it?"

Now why did Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم not place his mubárak hands over the eyes of the sahábí رضی الله تعالی عنه, but placed them on his shoulders? The reason is that by placing the hands over the eyes, a person becomes terrified. A burden settles on the heart.

So, Rasúlulláh صلی الله علیه وسلم is giving the ta'lím that it is not correct that a mu'min should behave towards another mu'min in such a manner and in

such ways as to cause a burden to settle on him. Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم gave the ta'lím of placing the hands on the shoulders and not over the eyes.

What was the reason for this? As explained: by suddenly placing the hands over the eyes the heart becomes agitated. A weight settles on the heart. Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم has shown by his action that a mu'min should take the utmost care and precaution not to behave towards another mu'min in such a manner as to cause a burden to settle on his heart.

Du'á

May Alláh Ta'álá grant us the kámil taufíq to continually practise and live our lives in accordance with this. وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

APPENDIX

Extracted from SAHÍH BUKHÁRÍ Sharíf, Volume: 1.

Narrator: ''Abdullah bin 'Abbas رضی اللہ تعالی عنہ

Abú Sufyán bin Harb's response to Heraclius' questions

[The incident that Hadhratjí رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had alluded to is being reproduced here. It should be borne in mind that Abú Sufyán had not accepted Islám at the time this incident took place. Therefore, it cannot be said that Abú Sufyán spoke out of sympathy for the Muslims. To the contrary, he was one of the leaders of the Quraish who waged war against the Muslims on several occasions.]

Abú Sufyán bin Harb informed me that Heraclius had sent a messenger to him while he had been accompanying a caravan from Quraish. They were merchants doing business in Shám (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan), at the time when Alláh's Apostle صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم had a truce with Abu Sufyán and the Quraish infidels. So Abú Sufyán and his companions went to Heraclius at Ilya (Jerusalem.) Heraclius summoned them to the court and he had all the senior Roman dignitaries present around him.

He called for his translator who, translating Heraclius's questions, said

to them: "Who among you is closely related to that man who claims to be a Prophet?" Abú Sufyán replied: "I am the nearest relative to him (among the group)." Heraclius said: "Bring him (Abú Sufyán) close to me and make his companions stand behind him." Abú Sufyán added: "Heraclius told his translator to tell my companions that he wanted to put some questions to me regarding that man (the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) and that if I told a lie they (my companions) should contradict me." Abú Sufyán added: "By Alláh! Had I not been afraid of my companions labelling me a liar, I would not have spoken the truth about the Prophet.

"The first question he asked me about him was: 'What is his family status among you?'

I replied: 'He belongs to a good (noble) family among us.'

"Heraclius further asked: 'Has anybody among you ever claimed the same (i.e. to be a Prophet) before him?'

"I replied: 'No.'

"He said: 'Was anybody among his ancestors a king?'

"I replied: 'No.'

"Heraclius asked: 'Do the nobles or the poor follow him?'

"I replied: 'It is the poor who follow him.'

"He said: 'Are his followers increasing or decreasing (day by day)?'

"I replied: 'They are increasing.'

"He then asked: 'Does anybody among those who embrace his religion become displeased and renounce the religion afterwards?'

"I replied: 'No.'

"Heraclius said: 'Have you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (of Prophethood)?'

"I replied: 'No.'

"Heraclius said: 'Does he break his promises?'

"I replied: 'No. We are at truce with him, but we do not know what he will do in it.' I could not find opportunity to say anything against him except that.

"Heraclius asked: 'Have you ever had a war with him?'

"I replied: 'Yes.'

"Then he said: 'What was the outcome of the battles?'

"I replied: 'Sometimes he was victorious and sometimes we.'

"Heraclius said: 'What does he order you to do?'

"I said: 'He tells us to worship Alláh and Alláh alone and not to worship anything along with Him and to renounce all that our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste and to keep good relations with our kith and kin.'

"Heraclius asked the translator to convey to me the following: 'I asked you about his family and your reply was that he belonged to a very noble family. In fact all the Apostles come from noble families among their respective peoples. I questioned you whether anybody else among you claimed such a thing and your reply was in the negative. If the answer had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man was following the previous man's statement. Then I asked you whether anyone of his ancestors was a king. Your reply was in the negative; and if it had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man wanted to take back his ancestral kingdom. I further asked whether he was ever accused of telling lies before he said what he said, and your reply was in the negative. So I wondered how a person who does not tell a lie about others could ever tell a lie about Alláh. I then asked you whether the rich people followed him or the poor. You replied that it was the poor who followed him. And in fact all the Apostles have been followed by this very class of people. Then I asked you whether his followers were increasing or decreasing. You replied that they were increasing and in fact this is the way of true faith, till it is complete in all respects. I further asked you whether there was anybody who, after embracing his religion, became displeased and discarded his religion. Your reply was in the negative. And in fact this is (the sign of) true faith, when its delight enters the hearts and blends within them completely. I asked you whether he had ever betrayed. You replied in the negative and likewise the Apostles never betray. Then I asked you what he ordered you to do. You replied that he ordered you to worship Alláh and Alláh alone and not to worship anything along with Him and forbade you to worship idols and ordered you to pray, to speak the truth and to be chaste.

"'If what you have said is true, he will very soon occupy this place underneath my feet. And I knew it (from the scriptures) that he was going

to appear, but I did not know that he would be from you. And if I could reach him definitely I would go immediately to meet him. And if I were with him I would certainly wash his feet.'

"Heraclius then asked for the letter addressed by Alláh's Apostle صلى الله عليه وسلم, which was delivered by Dihya to the Governor of Busra, who forwarded it to Heraclius to read.

"The contents of the letter were as follows: 'In the name of Alláh the Beneficent, the Merciful (this letter is) from Muhammad, the slave of Alláh and His Apostle, to Heraclius, the ruler of Byzantine. Peace be upon him who follows the right path. Furthermore I invite you to Islám; and if you become a Muslim you will be safe, and Alláh will double your reward. And if you reject this invitation of Islám you will be committing a sin by misguiding your Arisiyin (peasants). (And I recite to you Alláh's statement): *'O people of the scripture! Come to a word common to you and us that we worship none, but Alláh and that we associate nothing in worship with Him, and that none of us shall take others as Lords beside Alláh. Then, if they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims (Those who have surrendered to Alláh. S.3:64)*

Abú Sufyán then added: "When Heraclius had finished his speech and had read the letter, there was a great hue and cry in the Royal Court. So we were turned out of the court. I told my companions that the question of Ibn-Abí-Kabsha (the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) has become so prominent that even the King of Baní Al-Asfar (Byzantine) is afraid of him. Then I started to become sure that he (the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) would be the conqueror in the near future till I embraced Islám (i.e. Alláh guided me to it.)"

The sub-narrator adds: "Ibn An-Natur was the Governor of Ilya' (Jerusalem) and Heraclius was the head of the Christians of Sham. Ibn An-Natur narrates that, once, while Heraclius was visiting Ilya', he got up in the morning with a sad mood. Some of his priests asked him why he was in that mood. Heraclius was a foreteller and an astrologer. He replied: 'At night when I looked at the stars, I saw that the leader of those who practise circumcision had appeared (and become the conqueror). Who are they who practise circumcision?' The people replied: 'Except the Jews nobody practises circumcision, so you should not be afraid of them (Jews). Just

issue orders to kill every Jew present in the country.'

While they were discussing it, a messenger sent by the king of Ghassan to convey the news of Alláh's Apostle صلى الله عليه وسلم to Heraclius, was brought in. Having heard the news, he (Heraclius) ordered the people to go and see whether the messenger of Ghassan was circumcised. The people, after seeing him, told Heraclius that he was circumcised. Heraclius then asked him about the Arabs. The messenger replied: 'Arabs also practise circumcision.' (After hearing that) Heraclius remarked that the sovereignty of the Arabs had appeared. Heraclius then wrote a letter to his friend in Rome who was as good as Heraclius in knowledge. Heraclius then left for Homs (a town in Syria) and stayed there till he received the reply of his letter from his friend, who agreed with him in his opinion about the emergence of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the fact that he was a Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

On that Heraclius invited all the heads of the Byzantines to assemble in his palace at Homs. When they had assembled, he ordered that all the doors of his palace be closed. Then he came out and said: 'O Byzantines! If success is your desire and if you seek right guidance and want your empire to remain, then give a pledge of allegiance to this Prophet (i.e. embrace Islám).' (On hearing the views of Heraclius) the people ran towards the gates of the palace like onagers [wild Asian asses], but found the doors closed. Heraclius realized their hatred towards Islám. And when he lost the hope of their embracing Islám, he ordered that they should be brought back in audience. (When they returned) he said: 'What I have said was just to test the strength of your conviction and I have seen it.' The people prostrated before him and became pleased with him, and this was the end of Heraclius's story (in connection with his faith).

[Christians cannot deny the truth of Islám, as the a above recorded incident, together with many others, demonstrates that the Christians of that time recognised that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم was the true messenger of Alláh Ta'álá.]

BOOKLET NUMBER TWELVE

Originally published Rabí-uth Thání 1421 – July 2000
Revised Ramadhán 1424 – October 2004

INTRODUCTION TO THE ORIGINAL BOOKLET

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Alhamdulilláh, Booklet Number Twelve is now ready, solely though the fadhl of Alláh Ta'álá and the barkat of our sheikh رحمة الله عليه.

In preparing this booklet there is a slight departure from previous issues in that this is a translation, not of a majlis, but of a lecture on Tauhíd delivered by Hadhrat Mauláná Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه. The place and date of deliverance are not stated. Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib had it published in Urdú in Hijrí 1411 (1990). The foreword is by him, Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت بركاته. A Hadíth Sharíf that creates a lot of concern is the following:

Hadhrat Abú Hurairah رضى الله تعالى عنه narrates that Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

عَنْ اَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ اَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ بَادِرُوْا بِالْاَعْمَالِ فَتَكُوْنَ فِتَنٌ كَقِطَعِ اللَّيْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ يُصْبِحُ الرَّجُلُ مُؤْمِنًا وَ يُمْسِيْ كَافِرًا وَيُمْسِيْ مُؤْمِنًا وَيُصْبِحُ كَافِرًا يَبِيْعُ دِيْنَهٗ بِعَرَضٍ مِّنَ الدُّنْيَا

Be prompt in doing good deeds (before you are overtaken) by turbulence which would be like a part of the dark night. During (that stormy period) a man would be a believer in the morning and turn to disbelief in the evening, or he would be a believer in the evening and turn to disbelief in the morning and sell his faith for worldly goods. (Muslim Sharíf)

Faith – ímán – is that precious gift that needs to be safeguarded at all costs. What is ímán? What are its ramifications? It is in answer to these and many other questions concerning ímán that the subject of Tauhíd has

been chosen for Booklet Number Twelve.

An introduction to Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت برکاته

Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت برکاته is the illustrious son of an illustrious father – his father being Hadhrat Sháh Mauláná Háfiz Jalíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, who was also known as Piyáre-Mian, khalífah of Hadhrat Mauláná Ashraf 'Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه. Mention of him has been made in the foreword of Booklet Number Ten.

Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت برکاته was born in Thánah Bhawan, in the house of Hadhrat Mauláná Ashraf 'Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه. Although the family was originally from 'Alígarh, Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib's رحمة الله عليه father stayed for 17 to 18 years in the company of Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه, staying in his house, this being the reason why Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت برکاته was born there. After his birth he was blessed by being fed some dates chewed by Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه.

His Díní education started in "Khánqáh-Imdádiyah-Ashrafiyah" in Thánah Bhawan. Two years after Hadhrat Thánwí's رحمة الله عليه demise Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib's father returned to 'Alígarh, where his father taught him the initial Arabic kitábs. After the formation of Pakistan, his father settled in Lahore and became engrossed in the establishment of the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen, Pakistan" – it was for this purpose he had taken up residence in Pakistan – and Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت برکاته completed his studies in Lahore, graduating in 1957 as an 'álim and muftí in "Jámi'ah-Ashrafiyah".

Two years after qualifying he commenced teaching at the same institute and he has been there ever since. He is also the Deputy-Muftí at the same institute. He is also tirelessly involved in furthering the aims and objects of the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen, (Pakistan)". As mentioned previously in Booklet Number Ten, the "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen, (Pakistan)" was established by his father, Hadhrat Sháh Mauláná Háfiz Jalíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, to give practical force to the all-comprehensive programme that Hadhrat Mauláná Ashraf 'Alí Thánwí رحمة الله عليه had laid down for the reformation of the Muslim Ummah. Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání

Sáhib دامت برکاته is a member of the Shurah of "Majlis Siyánatul-Muslimeen, (Pakistan)". He is also editor of the monthly magazine: "As-Siyánah," that the organisation prints and distributes. He has eight other publications to his name.

Connection with Hadhrat Mauláná Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه

Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت برکاته is the nephew of our Hadhrat Mauláná Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib رحمة الله عليه, his mother being our Hadhrat's رحمة الله عليه sister. Besides that Hadhrat Wakíl Sáhib is also our Hadhrat's رحمة الله عليه son-in-law, being married to one of our Hadhrat's رحمة الله عليه daughters. Hadhrat Wakíl Sáhib is also our Hadhrat's رحمة الله عليه khalífah.

Dr.I.M.

[Hereunder follows the foreword to "At-Tauhídul-Haqíqí" penned by Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت برکاته himself.]

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

By Hadhrat Wakíl Ahmed Sharwání Sáhib دامت برکاته

This "At-Tauhídul-Haqíqí," which is in your hands and appears in the form of a treatise, is an all-encompassing, forceful wáz which. Árif-billáh, Hadhrat Mauláná Sháh Masíhulláh Khán Sáhib, Jalálábádí رحمة الله عليه*, Khalífah-Arshad of Hakím-ul-Ummat, Mujaddid-ul-Millat, Hadhrat Thánwí* رحمة الله عليه *had delivered somewhere. This wáz maintains its vibrancy. By perusing it and reading it; it is an excellent rendering on TAUHÍD; it refreshes one's ímán; it is a magnificent gift for the mu'min (believer); and it is an amazing source of employment for writers and lecturers. Reading it or listening to it, mollifies the stoniest of stony hearts; and it reveals the way (to guidance) to the antagonists of TAUHÍD.*

It has been delivered in a manner both charming and pleasing and in a mode that involuntarily draws every reader towards his Ma'bud-Haqíqí (i.e. Alláh Ta'álá.) Every Muslim in general, and every writer and every public speaker in particular,

should read this wáz repeatedly and make it his/ her prized object.
Wakíl Ahmed (may he be forgiven.)
Baitul-Ashraf
78 A Model Town, Lahore.

AT-TAUHÍD-UL-HAQÍQÍ – THE REALITY OF TAUHÍD

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ

اَمَّا بَعْدُ:

فَقَالَ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: بُنِيَ الْاِسْلَامُ عَلٰى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ اَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَاَنَّ مُحَمَّدًاعَبْدُهٗ وَرُسُوْلُهٗ وَاِقَامِ الصَّلٰوةِ وَاِيْتَاءِ الزَّكٰوةِ وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ وَالْحَجِّ

The basic pillars of Islám

The mubárak statement of Huzúre-Akram (i.e. Rasúlulláh) صلى الله عليه وسلم is that Islám is founded on five basic pillars:

Firstly: *To bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Alláh Ta'álá and that Muhammad* صلى الله عليه وسلم *is the bondsman and messenger of Alláh Ta'álá.*

Secondly: to *perform salát (the five daily compulsory prayers) with punctuality;*

Thirdly: *To give zakát (the compulsory charity for those who are of means);*

Fourthly: *To keep the fasts (of Ramadhán Sharíf); and*

Fifthly: *To perform hajj (the pilgrimage to Makkah).*

From the above translation of the Hadíth Sharíf you will have come to realise that the foundation of Islám has been placed on five fundamentals. Also, it will be known to everybody that only when the foundation of any item is firmly established on some definite aspects, then only will that item and structure be considered to be perfect and solid, worth relying

on and it will then qualify for producing peace of mind. Otherwise, it will cause a variety of apprehensions and a dispersion of thoughts, making life veritably bitter.

This being so, why then is constructive benefit not taken from the accepted principles and known prerequisites of the Islámic foundations? If even one foundation of Islám becomes weak or deficient in a person, then that person's Islám will be shaky and defective, not strong and perfect. A statement of Hadhrat 'Umar رضی الله تعالی عنه is as follows:

نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ اَعَزَّنَا اللهُ بِالْاِسْلَامِ

We are such a nation that Alláh Ta'álá has blessed us with izzat with Islám.

These are the five fundamental teachings of Islám. When one has developed firmness and permanence in them, only then will one attain that jáh aur jalál (prestige and grandeur), that izzat aur hashmat (honour and dignity), whereby one will then be called a kámil Muslim and one will be able to live a life full of izzat because one has fulfilled the call inherent in:

نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ اَعَزَّنَا اللهُ بِالْاِسْلَامِ

We are such a nation that Alláh Ta'álá has blessed us with izzat with Islám.

For the Muslim, who is also a claimant of another life (in the hereafter) and has firm belief in it, it is his primary fardh duty to grasp firmly onto the five fundamentals of Islám and to remain steadfast on them. The command of Alláh Ta'álá is:

وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِحَبْلِ اللهِ جَمِيعًا

All of you grasp firmly to the rope (silsilah) of Alláh. (S.3.103.)

This rope, this silsilah, is veritably this Islám on which we have been given the instruction to hold steadfastly on to! Consequently, in order to be exemplary (kámil) Muslims, in order to live with honour and respect, in order to attain a life of serenity and comfort in both the worlds, and in order to be blessed with the true pleasure and happiness of our Ahkamul-Hákimín (i.e. Alláh Ta'álá), it is necessary to come to know the details of

these five items and to understand their reality. And this is the primary lesson of our lives.

The basic principle

From among the principles, the first principle is the Kalimah-Shahádat, that is:

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّداً عَبْدُهٗ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ

I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Alláh Ta'álá and I bear witness that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم *is His bondsman and messenger.*

This is a basic principle for the following reason: Everybody knows that in dín (religion) there are various categories, some of which are principles and others are branches of these. Then, among the principles, one is a basic principle and the others are ordinary principles. Who is not aware that the principles take precedence over the branches, and also that, among the principles, the basic principle takes precedence and priority over all the other principles? This means that the basic principle is such that all the branches are dependent on it.

Thus, whoever accepts the basic principle enunciated above will be called a Muslim. Therefore, the first basic aspect, without which no virtuous actions are acceptable, without which no 'ibádat is beneficial, without which no tá'at is a basis for qurbe-Khudáwandí, is this Dín-e-Muhammad and Mazhabe-Islám (that is. the religion of Islám as brought to us by Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم:

إِنَّ الدِّيْنَ عِنْدَ اللهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۗ

The (only) dín (acceptable) by Alláh is (the Dín of) Islám. (S.3.19.)

Another statement of Bárí-Ta'álá (Alláh) is as follows:

وَمَنْ يَّبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا فَلَنْ يُّقْبَلَ مِنْهُ ۚ

That person who desires and searches for another Dín besides Islám, then (this other Dín and mazhab) will never be accepted. (S.3.85.)

The status of Islám and ímán

This status of Islám and ímán is such that no matter how magnanimous a deed a person performs, but if he is not a Muslim, then that deed has no worth. A person may undertake a thousand acts of mujáhadah and riyádhat, but, if he is not a Muslim, then there will be no beneficial results. It is in connection with such people, that Bárí Ta'álá states:

أُولَـٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ ۖ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوْا فِيْهَا وَبٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝

These are those people for whom there is nothing else (in the way of thawáb) in the hereafter except the fire (of Jahannam) and whatever they did in the world will be in vain and of no effect and whatever they are doing now is also of no effect. (S.11.16.)

From this you would have come to realise the virtue of Islám, and to what degree is the above principle fardh from among the fardh principles. Without it there is absolutely no salvation, neither complete nor partial. This is the greatest ne'mat from among the a'mál and fará'idh (deeds and compulsory acts).

By leaving out what is sunnat and mustahab there is reproof, and it is also possible that there is no reproof. And by leaving out what is fardh and wájib there is punishment, even though it is possible that there is maghfirat without punishment.

However, Islám and ímán are such fará'idh that in their absence there is no situation except that of punishment. Punishment becomes compulsory and that too permanently (dá'imí-abad-ul-ábád) – punishment for that time period that will never come to an end! This is because the absence of ímán and Islám is kufr and shierk and in relation to kufr and shierk Bárí Ta'álá states:

إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُّشْرَكَ بِهٖ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ

Verily, Alláh Ta'álá will not forgive shierk, beside which He will forgive all (besides these) whom He wills. (S.4.48.)

Islám and ímán and unitarianism

Upon this, if any person perhaps has the doubt that this áyet states forgiveness for shierk and not kufr that there are some kuffár who are not mushrik, but are mawáhid (unitarians, believing in One God), but reject Islám and Therefore, ask: "So, where is there mention in this áyet that they will not be forgiven?" The answer to this is as follows: Firstly, kufr is that very entity which is contrary to Islám, whether it is associated with shierk or not. The punishment is the same for both. Secondly, at another place an áyet related to the kuffár also appears:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِيْنَ فِيْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا أُولَـٰئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ۝

Those from among the people of the Book and the mushrikín who have adopted kufr, will go to the fire of Jahannam, wherein they will remain forever, (and) these are the worst of the creation. (S.98.6.)

In this áyet, the kuffár have been equated to the Ahle-Kitáb and the mushrikín and they are also stated as entering Jahannam. Also, to dispute that entry into Jahannam means a stay for a short while, which does not necessitate a permanent stay, is incorrect. The reason is that it is incorrect to impute different meanings to one word in a single statement. Thus, when it has been proven that the stay for the mushrik is permanent then, it follows, that this is also proof that the stay for the káfir is also permanent, because the order applies to both in this áyet.

Also, another statement of Bárí Ta'álá is as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوْا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَّغْفِرَ اللهُ لَهُمْ ۝

Verily, those who have become káfir and they have stopped (others) from the Path of Alláh and they have remained as káfir and died (as such), then Alláh will never forgive them. (S.47.34)

Thus, it is quite plain to see that the káfir will permanently be in punishment, from which it will also be understood that the kuffár will never be forgiven.

The appropriateness between crime and punishment

This is also an answer to a doubt some people harbour. They ask: “Why does the Sharí’at lay down permanent punishment for kufr – whereas punishment should be appropriate to the crime. The crime is limited, but the punishment meted out is unlimited. For example: a particular káfir’s age has reached 50 and he has died in the state of kufr. So, the crime of kufr that he has committed is only for a period of 50 years, but his punishment is going to be for an unlimited period, much longer than 50 years. What is the reason for this?”

First answer: conformity does not mean equal in time-periods

It is accepted that the punishment should be in conformity with the crime. However, it is accepted by everybody that conformity does not mean that the crime and the punishment should be equal in duration. If this were so, then a thief who is involved in stealing for a period of two hours should be sentenced by the judge to two hours of imprisonment! Nobody would say that such a judge is just. From this it is apparent that as far as crime and punishment are concerned the meaning is not that both should be in conformity with regard to the time-periods of both. However, the meaning is that the severity of the punishment should be in conformity with the severity of the crime.

Do you not know that in many actions the niyet also plays a big role? Reward and punishment is not dependent merely on the outward appearance.

For example: A person is deceived into drinking alcohol unwittingly. There is no sin on him for this, even though the settings appear to be those of sin. As his intention was not to drink alcohol, this is not a crime. On the other hand, take a person who goes to a bar with the intention of drinking alcohol. The bartender serves him sharbat instead of alcohol and he drinks it thinking that it is alcohol, this person will then be sinful. The reason is that it was his intention to drink alcohol.

Take another example: A person in a dark room has sexual intercourse with a woman, thinking her to be a stranger (and not his wife), but it turns out that she is his wife! He will be a sinner. In a similar manner, if

he were to have sexual intercourse with his wife and imagines her to be some other woman in order to extract extra enjoyment, then too, he will be a sinner! The question is: why should he be a sinner? The reason is that his intention was that of having intercourse with a strange woman, even though the apparent setting was not of sin. On the contrary, take the situation where it is the first night of marriage and the groom (not having met his bride previously) mistakenly has sexual intercourse with some other woman (thinking her to be his bride), then the groom will not be a sinner. In technical terms this is called "watí-bish-shubah". Any offspring conceived as a result will be legitimate. Iddat for the woman will be compulsory.

So, in a similar manner, is the situation of the káfir. Even though his crime is limited in time, but his intention was to remain in kufr for always, for he is virtually saying: "If I were to live for eternity, I will remain in this condition of kufr." Therefore, In accordance with his niyet he will suffer everlasting punishment.

[If his intention was not to remain in kufr forever, but to bring ímán before he died, then he would not have waited, but would have brought ímán as soon as possible, seeing that death can occur at any moment – Tr.]

In the same manner, the Islám of a Muslim appears to be for a limited period, but his niyet is: "If I were to remain alive I would remain steadfast on Islám forever." Therefore, he will be rewarded according to his intention and he will remain in Jannat forever.

Second answer: the rights of Alláh Ta'álá are unlimited

Kufr is an abrogation of Huqúq-e-Iláhí (rights of Alláh Ta'álá.) And, as Huqúq-e-Iláhí are unlimited, the punishment should also be commensurably unlimited.

Third answer: the crime of treason deserves maximum punishment

If one takes a person who is extremely capable, and has all the excellent qualities to a very high degree, but, at the same time, he is also guilty of treason, everybody knows what his punishment should be. It is obvious that he will be executed or exiled to a far distant land or be imprisoned for

life. However, up to today no philosopher has ever thought of criticising this punishment and asked: "Why this permanent punishment?" The judge, upon passing this sentence, will not even have a whispering doubt that the sentence is unreasonable. However, when Khudá Ta'álá (Alláh, most high) does the same, then one has a doubt about it! What type of ímán is this and what type of Islám?

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُوْنَ ۝

To Alláh do we belong and to Him is our return! (S.2.156.)

Essentially, it has been proven that if an individual is not obedient to the government in power, all his excellent qualifications will not be able to save him, whether he be a very prominent scientist or mathematician, engineer or doctor, manufacturer or merchant, historian or publisher, poet or author, philosopher or sociologist, officer or ruler. All these accomplishments will not be able to save him from the punishment of having committed treason. Because of his committing treason, he will necessarily be liable to be sentenced to death or be imprisoned for life.

Alas! For that person who commits treason against the state, it is fully accepted that all his deeds and all his good qualities become nullified, whereas that person who commits treason against the Mightiest of Rulers – Ahkamul-Hákimín (Alláh Ta'álá) by not bringing ímán – this being synonymous to treason that he does not accept the Laws – that the punishment for his treason is criticised and condemned!

Irsháde-Rabbání – the statement of our Rabb – is as follows:

أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ ۚ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوْا فِيْهَا وَبٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝

These are those people for whom there is nothing else (in the way of thawáb) in the hereafter except the Fire and whatever they did in the world will be in vain and of no effect and whatever they are doing now is also of no effect. (S.11.16.)

Lawázim-e-Muhaqqiqiyet

[The necessary qualities of a true scholar. Muhaqqiq: scholar/ philosopher/ one who has an in-depth knowledge of what is Truth.]

The above types of doubts are emitted from the lips and tongues of those who consider themselves to be firm and truthful Muslims, even considering themselves to be leaders of the nation and their reformers! The reason for such doubts arising is that these people think: "We are muhaqqiq". All this corruptive thinking is the result of the claim to being a muhaqqiq, whereas one of the compulsory requisites, of being a muhaqqiq, is not to consider oneself to be a muhaqqiq, even though a person may be a qualified and excellent 'álim. So, what of that person who is not a qualified 'álim and considers himself to be a muhaqqiq and 'allámah? So much so that nowadays the knowledge of those people who consider themselves to be muhaqqiq is very limited.

Let us take just one example: They consider imkán-e-zát (the mere possibility of something existing) to be wujúb (the definite existence of that item – so much so that it is impossible for it to exist.) Similarly, they consider imtiná-e-'ádí (something which is improbable; that which is not normally possible) to be imtiná'-e-'aqlí aur mahál (theoretically improbable and impossible). Having studied a bit of history, having learnt a bit of philosophy, and having a passing acquaintance with modern literature, they now consider themselves to be muhaqqiqs. And when a person considers himself to be a muhaqqiq, then the following line of reasoning predominates: "Whosoever opposes our opinions is also opposed to factual evidence and research." They then feel free to express whatever fanciful criticisms that cross their minds. One such criticism expressed by them is the one that has been discussed above.

Treason with regard to risálat

[Risálat – the acceptance of Hadhrat Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم *as the final Rasúl (messenger) of Alláh Ta'álá.]*

Having dealt with that criticism, another criticism will now be discussed, the essence of which is: "Fine. This much has been understood that if a person commits an act of treason against Alláh Ta'álá, then all his deeds

should be cancelled and nullified. But if a person believes in Alláh and he does not believe in Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم, then what is the reason for his deeds being cancelled and him being declared a káfir?"

Take it that there are also many such who consider themselves to be Muslim, but do not consider rejection of risálat to be kufr. They say: "Just Tauhíd is sufficient." Whereas in the Qur'áne-Pák, which is the Kaláme-iláhí (Word / Speech of Alláh Ta'álá) several references have been made to our Nabí صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم being the Rasúl of Alláh Ta'álá. A clear statement is the following:

مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللهِ ۚ

Muhammad (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم) is the Rasúl of Alláh. (S.48.29)

When, in the Kalám-e-Iláhí itself, it has explicitly been stated that Muhammad صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم is a Rasúl, what grounds are there for refutation? By its refutation it is necessary to conclude – we seek the protection of Alláh Ta'álá! – that Alláh Ta'álá is a liar and that Alláh Ta'álá is not perfect in the attribute of sidq (honesty)!

In actual fact "to believe in Alláh Ta'álá" means that one has to believe that Alláh Ta'álá is free and pure of all faults and deficiencies and that He is considered to be the embodiment of all the cumulative and comprehensive attributes (sifát) of perfection. From among these attributes is that of sidq. If an individual does not have this belief, then he will not be considered to believe in Alláh Ta'álá, but to believe in his own fancies.

Thus, it has been proven that if a person rejects risálat and does not believe in it, then he has committed treason against Alláh Ta'álá; and it is obvious that, whoever commits treason against Alláh Ta'álá, his punishment is everlasting.

The status of 'aqá'id & a'mál (beliefs & deeds)

Some intellectuals of modern times have eliminated 'aqá'id – not at the theoretical level, but at the practical level – from the circle of the notion of rectitude. They even consider themselves to have free choice in the matter. They feel that 'aqídah consists only of some thoughts and Therefore, fall

into a category of non-essentials.

That leaves one with a'mál. They do consider them to be necessarily effective to some degree, but even then only some qualities are considered to be so.

For example: mercy; self-sacrifice; compassion, assisting others; generosity and benevolence; love of one's people; etc. They have based the whole concept of being civilised and cultured on these few qualities. They consider portrayal of these qualities to be a very high degree of being civilised. They have Therefore, based a'mál on these few qualities and have put forward this criticism: "Take a person who respects and honours a buzurg (pious, saintly person), he believes Alláh Ta'álá to be One, he is not even disrespectful with regard to the Rasúls, he is obedient to his parents, he has beautiful manners and politeness, he is shy and humble, he speaks softly and with humility, he is a good host, he keeps to his promises, as far as possible he tries to relieve the grief and suffering of others, he has good relations with his neighbours, and he is even merciful to the animals. In essence, he is a treasure of very good qualities. However, we fail to understand why, by the absence of just one issue, how can all his achievements be washed away?

"On the other hand, is that person who does not bother about halál and harám, who does not fulfil his fará'idh, who does not perform his namáz, who does not keep his fasts, is of horrible manners and is an extremely perverse sinner – a fásiq and fájir – such a Muslim will live in Jannat forever. Even though he is punished, but eventually, he will definitely enter Jannat. This we do not understand. This appears to be absolute bigotry and narrow-mindedness."

Answer to this criticism

This has been explained already, but needs repetition.

Let me ask this critic the following: A person is exceptionally capable, he has acquired the highest qualifications, he is an engineer without match, a craftsman par-excellence, a brilliant mathematician, a philosopher unrivalled, an outstanding historian, an unsurpassed commander of the armed forces, a matchless marksman, a scientific researcher and inventor,

but he is guilty of committing treason, being neither prepared to accept the laws of the country nor prepared to submit to them. Everybody knows what punishment the judge will impose on this person.

It is obvious that the law of the government will cause him to be exiled, executed or to be imprisoned for life. In fact, I take qasm and say that nobody will ever have a waswasah with regard to this sentence of the judge, and ever state that such a severe sentence is plain bigotry and contrary to fairness, or contrary to being merciful. Everybody understands that treason is such a crime that the punishment should be severe, irrespective of the quantity or degree of the perpetrator's good qualities and achievements. Should any doubtful person have any waswasah with regard to the judge's pronouncement, then it will be said: "The poor fellow! What can one do? He is simple-minded – an idiot!"

Therefore, whatever waswasah apply to Alláh Ta'álá, should apply equally to the judge, but the indignant irony and contradiction is that at no time is there any waswasah with regard to the judge's pronouncement, but when Alláh Ta'álá has made a pronouncement based on similar lines doubt is cast on it!

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُوْنَ – *To Alláh do we belong and to Him is our return!*

That person who commits treason against the state and, consequently, all his deeds and good qualities become nullified and ignored, and his punishment is permanent, all this is accepted completely and considered to be according to reason, whereas the punishment for that person committing treason against Alláh Ta'álá, one must place doubt on it? Astaghfirulláh!

Nobody will object that a person who has been gambling, stealing, usurping trusts, assaulting others, raping – one who has been involved in such flagrant offences and has displayed the worst of worst behaviour – that he should be dealt with so leniently as to be sentenced for a period limited to a mere two to four years and, thereafter, be released!

In comparison, that person who has several accomplishments, he is capable and honoured, generous, humble in nature, a man of his word, modest and soft-hearted, on his committing treason his punishment should be permanent? The poor fellow will never be released. He will spend his whole life in prison. He will now be permanently separated from his friends

and acquaintances, from his mother and father, from his wife and children. Heavens! Is this fair?

On the one hand is that person of evil disposition and character, who is sentenced to a short-term punishment and, on the other hand, is that person of beautiful conduct and having the welfare of the creation at heart, who is punished for an indefinite period just on one issue! This apprehension, this doubt, has never occurred to anybody and it is unlikely to occur.

Should any criticism arise and be relayed to the judge, the judge will reply: “There is a difference between the two. The one, even though he is contravening the laws of the state, yet he accepts the rule of the lawgiver – the king. He does not commit treason. The other, from the very outset, does not accept the state and desires to overthrow it. He does not accept the king.”

My question is: Is this statement of the judge accepted or not? It is obvious that the answer is in the affirmative. The answer of the judge is according to reason and logic.

So, it is astonishing that an answer that is issued from the lips of the judge-sáhib is accepted and if a similar answer is issued from the lips of the ’ulemá-e-Islám it is not acceptable! And the latter are accused of harshness and bigotry!

It is difficult to understand. Is it a crime to be a Muslim, that whatever issues from his lips has to be rejected, no matter how correct he may be? And if the same statement issues from the lips of a modernist it should be accepted immediately? If a doctor says that drinking alcohol is harmful to one’s health, then one is prepared to stop drinking immediately. And if the same statement is made by a rúhání doctor, that drinking alcohol is harmful to one’s rúhání health, then no credibility is given to this statement!

In actual fact, this poor ’álim-sáhib is not making this statement on his own behalf, but he is making it under the instruction of that hakím (physician) of the body and the rúh, of mind and matter, leader of both the worlds, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, and on the authority of the statement of Alláh Ta’álá. In fact, the relevant statement of Bárí Ta’álá is the following:

إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ

Surely intoxicants and gambling and idols and arrows of divination are the filthy works of Shaitán. (S.5.90.)

It is astounding that this is the condition of Muslims and then they say: "We are mu'min and Muslim!" These types of persons are also present in abundance in this age. That is why I have presented examples. Otherwise, there is no requirement or necessity for examples – the examples are there for clarification. In this instance, there is no obscurity which necessitated the presentation of examples for the sake of clarification. So, the actual need that arose for these examples to be presented, is that the attitudes of people have become so subverted that even in simple, plain issues they create suspicion and doubt.

Issues may not be in the category of 'aqídah, but they definitely fall in the category of opinions. That is why the necessity was perceived to clarify by means of examples, because the basis of salvation in Islám is similar to the situation of obeying the state as a basis of his acceptance by the state. Such a person, even if he commits crimes, after he has served the sentences for his crimes, one day, but one day, he will be freed again. On the contrary, there is just no way in which the punishment will be terminated for that person who has committed treason against the state.

The wealth of Islám

After my aforementioned discussion, together with the examples cited, it has been adequately established that, if there were any set of beliefs that are worthy of being taken to be the fundamental ideology of life and the bases of all actions, then that can only be of Islám. There are no other sets of beliefs that are worthy of being made the fulcrum around which all a'mál revolve.

Hence, the claim that I had made in the beginning: that if any concept can be given the highest eminence and priority, then it is only Islám. This has been clarified adequately. Also, from this talk of mine, the virtue of Islám and its mandatory nature would also have been understood. Its absolute value would have been realised that the qabúliyet of all that is fardh and

wájib, is based on having the correct ’aqídah of Islám, and that neither any fardh nor any wájib can be performed without this basis.

The status of fardh relative to nafl

Nowadays, people consider the nafl and mustahabát to have more virtues than the fardh, so much so, that those who are punctual with their nawáfil and mustahabát are praised extensively, even though they are not performing properly what is fardh. On the other hand, that person who is content in performing only what is fardh, wájib and sunnat-e-mu’akkidah, but does this beautifully and correctly, he is not valued and heeded, and nobody praises him. People think: “What does he do? Nothing special.” In actual fact, the reality is just the opposite. The haqíqat is this: The virtues of what is fardh are more extensive than that of nawáfil and mustahabát, and the thawáb is also greater.

As an illustrative example, we can liken to what is fardh is basic food, and to what is nawáfil and mustahabát are condiments like chutney. It is obvious that basic food will have greater virtue, value and priority over the chutney. Merely consuming chutney without food is without gain, but food without chutney is not so. This theme has been narrated in a Hadíth-e-Qudsí as follows:

مَنْ عَادالِيْ وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ اٰذَنْتُهٗ بِالْحَرَبِ وَمَاتَقَرَّبَ اِلَيَّ عَبْدِيْ بِشَيْءٍ اَحَبَّ اِلَيَّ مِمَّا اِفْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِيْ يَتَقَرَّبُ اِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَا فِلِ حَتّٰى اَحْبَبْتُهٗ

Whosoever shows animosity to my walí, I declare war upon him; and no bandah of mine can attain closeness to Me by means more beloved to Me than by virtue of such acts which I have made fardh on him; and My bandah will continue to draw closer to Me by means of nawáfil until I make him My beloved.

The noble muhaqqiqín fuqahá (jurists) and the súfíyán have also clarified it very nicely that, by means of fará’idh, closeness to Alláh Ta’álá is attained to a much greater extent than merely by nawáfil. This is the status of the fará’idh. And our situation is this that we place greater importance on being punctual with the nawáfil and mustahabát. So much so, that we have seen

that some people do not perform the ferá'idh with as much enthusiasm and fervour as they do the nawáfil. Then there are also those people who are performing the fará'idh, but have the deprecating thought: "We are doing nothing. We are only performing our fará'idh."

Now, if this thought presents itself out of a feeling of humility and lowliness, then it is mahmúd (good and noble). However, if it arises because he considers nawáfil and mustahabát to be superior to fará'idh, then this thought is reprehensible. The result of this is that the taufíq to make shukr on this ne'mat is reduced.

Another point: With regard to that person who is involved in performing nawáfil and mustahabát, and performs his fará'idh only under duress, one finds that others become devoted to him and he himself becomes convinced of his own status! He now considers himself to be a shab-guzár – a pious person who stays awake at night in salát – even though he tends to shy away from the fará'idh – that is, his fará'idh consist merely of up and down movements and do not contain the serenity, etiquettes and correctness that they should be performed with.

The effect of this error is that people do not appreciate the value of such a great ne'mat as Islám, and a person will think: "What have I ever got? I have nothing!" In actual fact, he has a very great treasure which the richest person in the world does not have, and that is the wealth of Islám and ímán. If he has shortcomings in the other fará'idh, then he will be sinful, and the effect will be that he will not enter immediately into Jannat, but only after some time. However, without Islám, there is just no question of attaining salvation, not through any other means. And it is also just possible that some sinners may be forgiven and not be punished at all. This also will happen

Audacity to commit crime

Upon this, perhaps somebody may raise the following argument:

Argument: "Really? Do the Muslims believe that sin and disobedience can be forgiven without punishment? If this is so, then the Muslims will develop the boldness and audacity to commit sin and be disobedient and, even after having committed the greatest of major crimes, they will still

have hope of salvation."

Answer: The answer to this is as follows: If, for argument's sake, the consequence of the above belief is that one is motivated into committing crimes, then the result would be that these consequences will be evidenced to a greater extent in those who are closely connected to Islám, that is, in the 'ulemá, the ittiqiyá and the súfíyá (the pious and saintly). These groups should manifest the consequences more and more. The reason is as follows: The general principle is that the effects of a religion are manifested more among those people who are closely attached to the religion. Whereas we see – and the kuffár also bear testimony to the fact – that those people who have more knowledge about Islám, and are more closely connected, never mind being involved in crimes, they refrain from getting involved even in doubtful deeds.

An incident demonstrating taqwá

This incident concerns a khalífah of our murshid, Hakímul-Ummat Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه.

Once, while travelling by train, he (the khalífah) had with him luggage greater in weight than stipulated by the regulations. He had the funds to pay for the excess luggage, but, because of the limited time before the train's departure, he could not see to the weighing of the luggage. Arriving at his destination, he related to the clerk at the station what had happened. He had the luggage weighed and requested the clerk to take the money for the excess. The clerk said that he had no time, and told him to carry on, and that there was no need to pay. However, this person replied: "You are not the owner of the railways. You are just an employee." (That is, as an employee he had no authority to cancel the payment. Only the owner could do this). He kept on insisting on paying.

Finally, he went to the stationmaster and related the whole story to him. The stationmaster also told him: "Do not be concerned. You just carry on." However, this person was adamant on paying. The clerk and the stationmaster started discussing the matter between themselves. Speaking in English, (thinking that this person would not understand), the one commented to the other: "This fellow appears to be drunk. Despite

our refusing, he insists on paying for the excess." This person was a sáleh individual. He was also well versed in English and understood every word spoken by the two. He said: "I do not drink. But it is our religious instruction that one should not be negligent concerning the rights of others." Despite this, the two railway officials refused to take payment.

He thought to himself: "What should I do now?" The idea occurred to him: "Let me buy a train ticket to the value of the excess luggage and then tear up the ticket. In this way, I will have discharged the rights of the railways." This is what he eventually did. Thereafter, it came to be well known among the officials of the railway that those persons who are on their way to Thánah-Bhawan to be with Hadhrat Mauláná Ashraf All Sáhib رحمة الله عليه do not travel without first having their luggage weighed. Thereafter, they used to weigh the luggage without any dilly-dallying.

This was the tremendous importance given to mu'ámulát in the teachings of our Hadhrat Thánwí رحمة الله عليه; and huqúq-ul-'ibád is also a form of mu'ámulát. Truthfully, can any nation portray the type of example shown in this incident?

To continue: If the 'aqídah mentioned previously were to have the effect of causing "boldness and audacity to commit sin and be disobedient," then the 'ulemá and sulehá would be the foremost in boldness and audacity. This is not the effect of the 'aqídah, as the critics would have us believe. However, its effect is to cause abstention from sins and revulsion for sins.

But, alas! The condition of the critics is as described in this couplet:

The gaze of my corrupted sight is lifted up,
By reason of which his every achievement appears flawed.

In other words, such a virtuous mas'alah that cuts the very roots of crime, those with corrupted sight see it as an invitation to being audacious in committing crimes!

Besides this, even looking at it from the theoretical point of view, this 'aqídah can never be the basis for the perpetuation of crime. If such were the case, it would mean that Haqq Ta'álá will forgive whomsoever he wishes despite that individual having committed major sins, whereas no person from among us knows whether Alláh Ta'álá will deal with him in terms of favour and forgiveness or in terms of punishment because, basically, the

Laws of the Sharí'ah are the criteria. In this situation, no individual can be unconcerned about being punished. To the contrary, every individual has the fear that he will be dealt with in accordance with the laws.

An example that an exception does not make the rule

The example of this is as follows:

A person is sexually impotent. Out of regret and shame, he swallows some strychnine in an attempt to commit suicide. By chance he does not die, but the strychnine gets digested into his system and makes him potent! There are cases reported where this has happened. However, the point is: because of this incidental and isolated occurrence will anybody suffering from impotence be rash enough to take strychnine? Never! In fact, every intelligent person knows that the specific effect of poison is to destroy. If, by chance, the specific effect of the poison is not seen, it does not mean that the poison has lost its specific quality. Therefore, neither will anybody give permission to others to swallow strychnine to improve his manliness and sexual drive, nor will anybody be rash enough to do so himself.

In the same way, everybody knows that the state or a ruler will grant an amnesty to a murderer as a royal favour. Despite this knowledge, nobody will be rash enough to go around committing murders, because it is known that the basic sentence for murder is execution by hanging; and that this sentence is carried out in practice as well, according to the laws of the country. On the other hand, royal favours and amnesty are not laws, but are dependent on the wishes of the ruler. It is not known with whom he will deal favourably and grant amnesty, and with whom he will not. Therefore, trusting and depending on the probability of an amnesty, can never be cited as being the basis for instigating people to commit crime. In the very same way, it is not a law that sins will be forgiven without punishment – it is merely a Royal amnesty. How can anybody infer this to be the cause of incitement to sin?

Another example: If somebody were to pick up a clod of earth for istinjá and – by chance – the clod of earth turns out to be a gold nugget, so, should one now depend on this type of coincidental happening, discard trading and agriculture and just sit back? Obviously, the answer is in the negative.

This being so, can anyone involved in major sins sit back complacently on the basis of someone being forgiven incidentally for having committed a major sin?

Special forgiveness

Also, the person being forgiven for such a sin will be forgiven because of some pious deed of his, a deed that was exceptionally maqbúl by Alláh Ta'álá. Through its barkat, other sins are forgiven. And nobody even knows whether he has any such deed which is exceptionally maqbúl by Alláh Ta'álá, and through the barkat of which his other sins will be forgiven! Therefore, the attitude: "Commit whichever sins you want to. They will be forgiven without there being punishment," – this degree of unconcern can never be correct under any circumstances.

It is because of Alláh Ta'álá's attributes of 'afú-aur-karam (forgiveness and grace) that some sins may be forgiven without punishment. He is rahím (most merciful) and karím (most bounteous) to an unlimited extent towards His bondsmen. Upon hearing this, instead of becoming brazen enough to commit sins, the compulsion should be to increase one's obedience. This is because, the greater the favours of one's Master, the greater will be the indebtedness shown by that person who has sense and who is right-minded. He will progress further in the enthusiasm and fervour of his tá'at (obedience) and 'ibádat. This effect is witnessed by those who have a greater connection with Islám and by companions of a king.

So now, based on this 'aqídah, if there develops an urge in anybody to be audacious and commit crimes, then it will be said that this is not the effect of the 'aqídah, but it is the effect of the person's innate perversity and depravity.

This would be similar to the situation where a king is bountiful, and the right-minded become more loyal as a result. However, some foolish people are brash enough to commit crimes, despite the king being so magnanimous. Will the evil actions of these people be attributed to the king's generosity or to their own malevolence? Obviously, the king will not be to blame.

Definite forgiveness

Be impartial. Put your intelligence to use. Where is His mercy; and where is our obstinacy! Some people quote:

لَا تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ۚ إِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ۝

Do not despair of the mercy of Alláh. Verily, Alláh will forgive all sins. Verily, He is Most Forgiving. (S.39.53.)

This is Alláh Ta'álá's statement. They maintain that from this it appears that Alláh Ta'álá will definitely forgive all sins, because here "límán-yashá" – "whom He wishes" – does not appear. However, these people should understand that the occasion of the revelation of this áyet is in connection with those who had desired to discard kufr and accept Islám and had even done so. They had this apprehension: "In future, we will refrain from sin. But, what will our accountability be with regard to the enormous crimes we committed when we were sunk in kufr ? We caused harm to the sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم and we caused a variety of torments to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم. If, after having accepted Islám, we are penalised for these, then what is the benefit of having accepted Islám?"

It comes in the Hadíth Sharíf that the kuffár presented themselves to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم and said:

لَوْاَسْلَمْنَا فَمَا يُفْعَلُ بِذُنُوْبِنَا الَّتِيْ اَسْلَفْنَا

If we accept Islám what will be the treatment meted out to us with regard to our previous sins?

It was in answer to this query that the above áyet was revealed. There is a phrase that appears at the beginning of this áyet:

يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ أَسْرَفُوْا عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ

O My bondsmen who have committed excesses on themselves

The meaning of this áyet will, therefore, be: "Those bondsmen of Mine who have made zulm on themselves should not despair of the Mercy of Alláh Ta'álá. Verily, Alláh Ta'álá will forgive all sins. Verily, He is Most Merciful." *(Note that the past tense is used here)*

Hence, the categorical promise of forgiveness that is contained in this áyet, applies not generally, but specifically to new Muslims.

Conditional forgiveness

In another áyet, there is the restrictive condition of Alláh Ta'álá's Will (mashiyet) being applied to those who are disobedient after becoming Muslim, and are forgiven without being punished:

وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ

He forgives besides that whom He wills. (S.4.116.)

And if it is said: "Al-ibraratal umúm al-lafzul kuasús al-mowrad" (the general application of the word will be taken into account and the specific application will not apply) that, according to this rule, the áyet will be kept generalised and unrestricted, then I shall say that, if one does not restrict it to the specific occasion of its revelation with this áyet, then we will have to restrict it with another áyet, because it is compulsory to restrict one áyet with another áyet to bring uniformity in the situation. It is apparent that the above áyet, and the one before, are both with regard to sinners and those who are disobedient. In the one, the forgiveness is restricted by the condition of "Will" (mashiyet); and in the other it is generalised. Therefore, what is generalised shall be subordinate to the restrictive. The one áyet concerns rules and laws, whereas the other áyet concerns alleviation of the despondency of the despondent. This latter condition was that of the kuffár that, without being reassured, their despondency would not be alleviated. That is why it was told to them that they should not be worried. They should accept Islám. All sins committed in the state of kufr would be forgiven by their acceptance of Islám. The Hadíth Sharíf states:

اَلْاِسْلَامُ يَهْدَمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهٗ

Islám annuls all sins committed before it.

Alláh! Alláh! How great and virtuous is not Islám! How magnificent is not the grandeur and exalted status of Islám! Despite the enormity of the crimes, yet, when this good and beneficial task of accepting Islám has been

performed, this nékí has washed them all away! The cleansing has been such as if they are as pure as the day they emerged from their mothers' wombs. Sub-hán-Alláh! All glory is to Alláh Ta'álá! What can one say about Alláh Ta'álá's Mercy?

إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللهِ قَرِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۝

Verily, Alláh's mercy is close to those doing pious deeds. (S.7.56.)

The nékí of accepting Islám has washed away all the rebelliousness of the years of kufr. How well has it not been stated in Fársí:

Come back! Come back! In whatever condition you may be, come back,

Irrespective of whether you are a káfir, a fire-worshipper or an idol-worshipper!

Our court is not one of despair,

Even if your taubah has broken a 100 times, come back!

"Lá taqnatú" – do not despair – has the specific purpose of alleviating the despondency of the despondent. The root word "qunút" (despondency) does not mean that it is not necessary to perform a'mál, and that it is not necessary to take care and vigilance to save oneself from committing sins. However, qunút itself provides proof that one has to perform a'mál. The word actually forbids despair, which is a result of sin. And rajá (hope, which is the opposite of despair) cannot arise without good deeds. At the time that a criminal is aware of his criminality, at that particular moment the concept of rajá cannot enter his mind. So, when it is wájib to abstain from qunút, then it is also wájib to abstain from the means that bring on despondency, the reason being that the rule is: the antecedent to wájib also becomes wájib. An obstinate slave can never be blessed with the rank of rajá (hope). Put it to the test.

أُحِبُّ مُنَاجَاةَالْحَبِيْبِ بِاَوْجُهٍ وَلٰكِنْ لِسَانُ الْمُذْ نِبِيْنَ قَلِيْلٌ

I love to whisper to my beloved However, by reason of the repeated crimes by the tongue of the criminal, imploration also stops.

Alhamdulilláh – All praise is due to Alláh Ta'álá! All criticisms have been satisfactorily rebutted. The replies have been provided as to why Islám is

the only religion acceptable from the religions of Hadhrat Ísá, Músá and Dawúd عليهم السلام. and their disciples, or from any other religion, and why the basis of salvation rests only with Islám. Also explained is the reason why there is everlasting punishment awaiting those who do not accept Islám, or who discard Islám after having accepted it. Also explained is why Muslims will attain salvation even though they may have committed sins, whether it be after being punished or without punishment.

The effects of refuting risálat

We now come to the second portion of Islám, that is risálat – the acceptance of Hadhrat Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم as the Rasúl of Alláh Ta'álá. The answers to the doubts and criticisms levelled at risálat will be related in some detail, in-shá-Alláh, as well as some virtues of Islám; and I shall terminate my lecture thereon.

Listen carefully! There are some people who are such that they do not consider belief in risálat to be necessary and consider themselves and others to be perfect mawáhids (unitarians/ monotheists) without faith and conviction (i'tiqád) in risálat. They do not consider the refutation of risálat to be kufr.

Take this illustration: The ruling king sends his appointed viceroy to us. It has been confirmed (i) by reports, (ii) by deduction and (iii) by certain special qualities, that he is somebody special from the Royalty and that this individual is his viceroy. Now, if we do not accept him and we refute the fact that his statements to be that of the king, can anybody say that we accept the king and his rule?

So, on the same bases, I am stating that (i) from clear-cut statements in the Qur'án Sharíf, there is proof of our Nabí صلى الله عليه وسلم being the Rasúl of Alláh. Then risálat is also verified on the basis of (ii) historical and biographical accounts, as well as accounts given in various Divine Scriptures. Finally, (iii) the mo'jazát (miracles) are categorical proofs, as they are signs of risálat.

Besides the above, there is a reply from an intellectual and imputative aspect as well, and it is this: By not accepting Rasúl Maqbúl صلى الله عليه وسلم automatically, it becomes compulsory that the person does not accept Alláh Ta'álá! The reason is that belief in Alláh Ta'álá and accepting Him, means

that one believe in Him as He should be believed in. If someone has i'tiqád in any other manner, then he has not believed in and accepted Alláh Ta'álá.

Let me explain this by means of an illustration: Somebody says: "I accept and believe in the ruling king." Someone else asks him: "And what is the king like?" He replies: "He is one-eyed. He has only one leg. Both his hands are cut off. He is mentally deficient. He is cowardly." In actual fact, the king is just the opposite. He is very beautiful and handsome. He is an intelligent administrator. His speech is eloquent and endearing. He is brave and tolerant. He has no faults. He is blameless. Thus, can one say that that person really believes in and accepts the king? Obviously, the answer is: No!

So, to believe in Alláh Ta'álá means that we should have strong faith and conviction in all His attributes and perfections. Among these is that of being honest and truthful. So, if a person does not consider Alláh Ta'álá to be truthful and honest, it means that he does not believe in and accept Alláh Ta'álá. Now ponder carefully! Alláh Ta'álá has stated in His Kalám (the Qur'án Sharíf):

مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللهِ

Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the Rasúl of Alláh. (S.48.29)

Thus, whoever refutes the risálat of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم he has considered Alláh Ta'álá to be a liar. And the refutation of the attribute of sidq is a refutation of Alláh Ta'álá.

Hence, we have shown adequately that a person who does not believe in and accept Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم, will be included among the mutineers, and are kuffár, and will be punished by everlasting punishment.

The difference between 'ibádat (worship) and itá'at (obedience)

The itá'at of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم is the itá'at of Alláh Ta'álá. 'Ibádat is one thing and itá'at is another. Some do not understand the difference between the two and consider the itá'at of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم to be contrary to Tauhíd. And this too, from those who consider themselves to be great intellectuals!

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُوْنَ – *To Alláh Ta'álá do we belong and to Him is our return!*

Is this intelligence, that one does not know the difference between 'ibádat and itá'at, and one still considers oneself to be an intellectual of deep understanding?

It is quite apparent that in 'ibádat there is no partner to Alláh Ta'álá as far as Muslims are concerned. Even Huzúre-Akram صلی اللہ علیه وسلم is not a partner in 'ibádat. This is the reason why it was not permissible to make sajdah to Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیه وسلم in his lifetime, and why it is not permissible to make sajdah at his grave.

Yes, in itá'at, the itá'at of Huzúre-Akram صلی اللہ علیه وسلم is the itá'at of Alláh Ta'álá. The reason for this is not that Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیه وسلم is a partner in itá'at, but the reason is that whatever Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیه وسلم narrated was a message from Alláh Ta'álá. Hence, the orders of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیه وسلم were, in reality, not his orders but, by virtue of being a Rasúl and a Messenger, they were Alláh Ta'álá's orders through the tongue of the Rasúl صلی اللہ علیه وسلم of Alláh Ta'álá.

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوْحىٰ ۙ

It is naught save a revelation that is revealed. (S.53.4.)

There is also another statement of Alláh Ta'álá:

مَّنْ يُّطِعِ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللهَ ۚ

The one who has obeyed the Rasúl has obeyed Alláh Ta'álá. (S.4.80.)

At another place it is stated:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُبَايِعُوْنَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُوْنَ اللهَ ط

Those who become bai'at to you (Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیه وسلم) they verily are becoming bai'at to Alláh. (S.48.10.)

The examples of this are those situations where the words of the wazír are taken to be the words of the king; the viceroy is considered to be part of royalty; being obedient to the collector, the regional administrator, is regarded as being obedient to the king; and insulting the judge is equivalent to insulting the king. Despite this, nobody will ever think that the wazír and

the king now have the same status. If any ignorant person was to think this and, in future, he respectfully kisses the chair of the wazír instead of the royal throne, definitely he will be earning the displeasure of the king.

Another example: Your appointed legal representative will act on behalf of you. That is, the representative's actions will reflect your wishes, that you have told him so. It does not mean that he is now your equal and that he is now the owner of your property, for him to utilise as he pleases! So, the Muslim is obedient to Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم in this respect. At no time does it become compulsory that he is now equal or in partnership (to Alláh Ta'álá).

Basis of salvation

What a shame that our adversaries raise criticisms, while having absolutely no understanding of the realities of Islámic masá'il. If they do understand, then the reason for their criticisms is pure hasad. In actual fact, nobody can ever level any valid criticisms against Islámic masá'il. From this discourse of mine, the purity of Tauhíd should be as clear to you honoured folk as the clearness of the blazing day.

This topic that we were discussing was that the first fundamental item and the first lesson is this: that one should be Muslim and that one's death should also be as a Muslim.

وَلَا تَمُوْتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ۝

And die not save as those who have surrendered (unto Him.). (S.3.102.)

This has been demanded from us. That is why it was stated that all religions in conflict with the religion of Islám have been abrogated:

إِنَّ الدِّيْنَ عِنْدَ اللهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۗ

The (only) dín (acceptable) by Alláh is Islám. (S.3.19.)

وَمَنْ يَّبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا فَلَنْ يُّقْبَلَ مِنْهُ ۚ

That person who desires and searches for another dín (besides Islám), then (this other dín and mazhab) will never be accepted from him. (S.3.85.)

The status, the rank and the virtue of Islám are so elevated that salvation lies solely in Islám. Without Islám there is just absolutely no question of salvation.

The barkat of the Kalimah-Tayyibah

The question now to be answered is: How do we attain salvation? My dear friends! The means is the Kalimah Sharíf: having the conviction of the Kalimah Sharíf in one's heart and to vocalise it with one's tongue. The Kalimah Sharíf is:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللهِ

There is no deity worthy of worship except Alláh,

(and) Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم *is the Rasúl of Alláh.*

This will efface all kufr and it will connect one with Alláh Ta'álá. This will cause the darkness of kufr to vanish and result in the light of ímán to fill the heart.

This is that pák (pure) Kalimah which, at the time that the earth and the heavens were created, was given to one of the malá'ikah, specially created for the task of reciting: "Lá-iláha-illalláh". That very malak is, even now, reciting the Kalimah in a loud voice, and will continue to do so till the time of the blowing of the Horn, the Day of Qiyámat.

If a mu'min recites this Kalimah with proper respect and honour, four thousand of his sins get forgiven!

Upon viewing something that is amazing and wondrous, one recites this Kalimah then, for each and every letter of the Kalimah, a verdant tree is created for him in Jannat. Each tree will have such an abundance of leaves as to equal the days in this world and each leaf will be making tasbíh and istighfár for the reciter of "Lá-iláha-illalláh" till the Day of Qiyámat.

A qissah concerning Fir'oun

A qissah comes to mind: Alláh Ta'álá ordered Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام, together with Hadhrat Hárún عليه السلام:

فَقُوْلَا لَهٗ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهٗ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشٰى

(When the two of you go to Fir'oun) converse with him gently, that perchance he may (enthusiastically) accept your advice or that he may fear. (S.20.44.)

In its commentary, some mufassirín have stated that Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام asked Alláh Ta'álá: "Lord of the worlds! What is meant by 'conversing gently'?" The reply was: "You tell Fir'oun (on My behalf): 'Do you desire reconciliation? Just see: For 450 years you were submerged in gratifying your nafs. So, now if you were to follow Our wishes for only one year, then all your sins will be forgiven. And if you are unable to do this, then be obedient for only one month. And if you cannot do this, then for even one day it is sufficient. And if you find even this to be distasteful, then for one hour would be sufficient. If you are unable to do so for even this period, then just in one breath recite "Lá-iláha-illalláh", and there will be reconciliation between Myself and you.' "

When our nabí Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام fulfilled the rights of his risálat and made tablígh to Fir'oun, then that rebellious and disobedient king, instead of saying "Lá-iláha-illalláh" boasted:

أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلٰى

I am your lord most high! (S.79.24.)

Upon this, the heavens and the earth trembled and requested from Alláh Ta'álá permission to destroy him. Alláh Ta'álá instructed: "He (Fir'oun) is like a dog. A little stick is sufficient for him. O Músá! Cast your staff on the ground." The moment Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام cast down his staff, immediately it changed into a serpent. Fir'oun was terrified. It occurred to him that this is some charismatic effect of Hadhrat Músá's عليه السلام magic. Fir'oun thus arranged for his magicians to contest Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام. The whole episode is quite famous. At the contest Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام threw his staff on the ground and it immediately turned into a serpent and swallowed up the magical tricks that the magicians had performed. Seeing this, all the magicians brought ímán as they fell into sajdah and recited:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ مُوسٰى كَلِيْمُ اللهِ

Fir'oun, on the other hand, instead of bringing ímán also, ran away into his palace. Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام followed him to the palace and called out: "O Fir'oun! If you do not come out of your palace I shall send my staff behind you and order it to get you!" Fir'oun heard this and called back: "O Músá! You should grant me some respite!" Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام replied: "I have no permission to grant you a respite." Upon this, Alláh Ta'álá sent wahí to Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام: "O Músá! Grant him respite. I have given him respite up to now. I am halím (most forbearing). I am not hasty in meting out punishment." Fir'oun was given respite. However, Fir'oun had such a fright that the effect of this dreadful experience caused his health to suffer, causing him to run to pass faeces forty times every day, which was not his habit formerly!

You have seen the grandeur of the bounty and sovereignty of Haqq Ta'álá, that He was prepared to grant a decree of forgiveness to such a notorious rebel just on recital of the Kalimah: "Lá-iláha-illalláh".

Another qissah concerning Fir'oun

There is another story about this same Fir'oun:

Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام said to Fir'oun: "Bring ímán" Fir'oun responded: "If I bring ímán what will I receive?" Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام said: "You will be granted the following four gifts: Firstly, you will remain alive till the Day of Qiyámat; secondly, this kingship (and empire) will remain yours till the day of Qiyámat; thirdly, you will remain in the prime of your life till the day of Qiyámat; and fourthly, you will remain in excellent health till the day of Qiyámat – you will not be afflicted with any illness." On hearing this Fir'oun said: "Very well. I will first make mashwarah." Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام said: "Make mashwarah with whomsoever you like, but do not make mashwarah with your wazír, Hámán."

Consequently, Fir'oun went to make mashwarah with his wife Bíbí Ásiyah رحمة الله عليه. She exclaimed: "These four promises are great blessings! Every person is desirous of these very four bounties. You should definitely bring ímán and you should do so quickly! Remember: 'Time slipped by cannot

be reclaimed.' "

Fir'oun got ready, but the rascal Hámán got wind of it. He came running to Fir'oun. Drawing his sword he placed it in front of Fir'oun and said: "I cannot bear it that up to the present the tongue with which Hámán called you a god, should now call you a bondsman! First, separate the neck of Hámán with this sword, then you can do as you wish!" Fir'oun was swayed by this emotional outburst from Hámán and, consequently, deprived himself of ímán.

From these qissas it is apparent that from the side of Alláh Ta'álá there was generosity and forgiveness, but from the side of Fir'oun the response was one of obstinacy – the rebel was not going to recite the Kalimah and he did not do so. The nett result was that he suffered the punishment, in this world, of being drowned in the sea and, in the hereafter, the punishment of being drowned in the painfully torturing flames of the fire of Jahannam.

The elevated status of the Kalimah

Alláh Ta'álá has described the elevated status of the Kalimah in the following way:

مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَّفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَآءِ ۙ تُؤْتِيْٓ أُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِيْنٍۭ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ؕ

Do you not see how Alláh sets an example: A good word is like a good tree which has firm roots with its branches reaching into heaven. It gives fruit at every season with the permission of its Lord. (S.14.24-25.)

The example of the Kalimah is like that of a tree: It is pure and clean (extremely pure and beautiful, bearing delicious fruit), its roots running deep and firm (that even though there may be gale-force winds and hurricanes it will remain firm in its place so that there is absolutely no question of it being affected by these). Its branches spread heavenwards, conversing with the skies. With the command of Alláh Ta'álá it continuously produces fruit.

This is the condition of the Kalimah-Tayyibah. Whoever has embedded it in the heart with honesty and sincerity, he will find that the root and

the foundation is grounded in his heart. Then, whatever challenges and debates the kuffár present, whatever doubts (waswasah) the Shayátín instill and whatever nafsání imaginations and perplexities arise, he will remain unshaken. Yes, if he commences to undermine the root himself by not irrigating it – by not carrying out good deeds (amilus-sálihah) – then this deficiency will be the basis of wavering. This will be the final result. Otherwise, the Kalimah-Tayyibah has contained in itself splendid and delicious fruits.

This is the reason that the Kalimah-Tayyibah has, at times, being likened to water: just as water cleanses and purifies the body and one's clothes of all dirt and filth, Similarly, the Kalimah-Tayyibah cleanses and purifies one from the dirt and filth of sins.

At times, the Kalimah-Tayyibah is likened to the sun. The reason for this is that just as the sun lightens and emblazons the earth and the skies with its beams of light, in a similar manner this Kalimah-Tayyibah emblazons the heart of its reciter and also spreads its light in the grave.

At times, the Kalimah-Tayyibah is likened to the stars. The reason is that just as the stars act as guides and means of navigation to the traveller, this Kalimah Sharíf also takes those who are lost in waywardness out of their darkness and places them on the common road of hidáyet (spiritual rectitude).

At times, the Kalimah-Tayyibah is likened to a date tree. There are a number of reasons for this:

Firstly, that just as the date tree does not flourish on every piece of soil, in a like manner the Kalimah-Tayyibah does not find a home in every heart.

Secondly, the date tree grows higher than other trees. Similarly, the root of the Kalimah-Tayyibah is embedded in the hearts of the Muslims and its branches throw its shade below the Arsh.

Thirdly, it will be noted that the lower portion of the date tree is rough and thorny, while the upper portion is laden with fruit. Therefore, anyone wishing to climb the date tree will have to undergo some toil and difficulties initially, then only will he be able to lay his hands on the rich and delicious fruit. In a similar manner, in the early phases, the reciter of this Kalimah has

to endure some difficulties, some trials and tribulations, then he reaches the goal of his quest and the delicious ‘fruit’, the greatest ‘fruit’ being the blessing of Dídár-e-Iláhí (beholding the Vision of Alláh Ta’álá).

This Kalimah-Tayyibah is also the key to the doors of Jannat. It is necessary for keys to have teeth and the ‘teeth’ of the Kalimah-Tayyibah consist of abstaining from all those items that have been made harám by Alláh Ta’álá and performing all those deeds that are wájib, because Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has said: “That person who recites ‘Lá-iláha-illalláh’ with conviction (aqídat) in his heart and with sincerity of intention shall definitely enter Jannat.” Those who were present asked: “O Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم! What is ikhlás?” Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “To abstain from whatever Alláh Ta’álá has made harám.”

Nabí-e-Karím صلى الله عليه وسلم is also reported as saying:

O Abú Hurairah رضى الله تعالى عنه! Every nékí will be weighed, but the Kalimah Shahádat will not be weighed for this reason that the reward for it will be unlimited!

The anwár of the Kalimah-Tayyibah

Hadhrat Ibn ’Ata رحمة الله عليه has stated that the zákir (reciter) of the Kalimah-Tayyibah attains three anwár:

1. *Núr-e-hidáyet (light of guidance):* Through the blessing of núr-e-hidáyet the darkness and gloom of shierk is eliminated.
2. *Núr-e-kifáyet (light of sufficiency):* That person on whom the bounty of núr-e-kifáyet settles is saved from all types of major sins and obscenities.
3. *Núr-e-’anáyet (light of favour):* That person blessed with núr-e-’anáyet is secure from all corruptive thoughts and from those activities that the neglectful are involved in.

Those blessed with the first type of núr are those making zikr of the Kalimah-Tayyibah with their tongues (zikre-lisání). However, their hearts are not attentive and are not affected.

The second category of núr is for those whose hearts are present and attentive, who are blessed with zikre-qalbí (remembering in the heart).

The third category of núr is the portion of those who do not forget their

Rabb for even a moment.

There is an indication towards this in the following áyet:

فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرٰتِ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ ۝

And there are some who oppress their own souls; and there are some who are of an average level; and some are such that they continue to progress [or surpass others] in doing good deeds (nékís) by Alláh's permission. That is the great favour. (S.35.32.)

Alláh Ta'álá has stated:

فَاذْكُرُوْنِيْٓ أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوْا لِيْ وَلَا تَكْفُرُوْنِ ۝

Keep yourself busy in My remembrance (and) I shall remember you. (S.2.152.)

O Muslims! Ponder! The basis of all our evil is not remembering Alláh Ta'álá. See, Alláh Ta'álá states that we should remember Him and He will remember us. Yet, we prefer to remain far, far away. The mu'azzin calls out "Hayya-alas-saláh" – "Come to namáz!" But we rush towards the bazárs and the pavilions! The mu'azzin again calls out: "Hayya-alal-faláh" – "Come to success!" and we rush towards mischief.

Ah! Somebody has said, very appropriately:

We are calling you, yet you flee from Us;
Ungrateful you have become – (do you think that you) are you out of Our sight?
Wherever you go, there We will be, O ignorant one!
Flee as you wish – but how will you conceal yourself from Us?

Barakát of zikr-e-Iláhí

The majlis of zikr-e-Iláhí is that special gathering that is best explained in the words of Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم: At times, a bandah comes to the gatherings of zikr-e-Iláhí burdened with countless sins. However, when he departs from that mubárak majlis he leaves clean and pure due to the barkat of that majlis, so that he is now not accountable for any of those

sins. This is why Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم has stated that the majlis of zikr is an extremely pleasurable and lush garden of the burgeoning and verdant gardens of Jannat.

Hadhrat Báyizid Bustámí رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has stated: "Anyone who remains in zikre-Iláhí remains in the shade of 'Shajarah-Tuba'."

['Shajarah Tuba' is the name of a tree in Paradise, yielding extremely delicious fruit.]

Hadhrat Abú Dardá رضی اللہ تعالی عنہ has narrated that Janáb Rasúl-e-Akram صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم has stated: "On the Day of Qiyámat such people will be raised from their graves that their faces will be brilliantly radiant with núr and they will be seated on mimbars of glittering pearls. They will neither be Ambiyá (Prophets) nor martyrs, but will be another category of people." A Bedouin, on hearing this, sat "do-zanú" [a respectful manner of sitting, as when one sits in "tasha-hud"] and asked: "O Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم! Who are these people? Kindly state this to us clearly." Rasúlulláh صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said: "These are those who had affection for one another solely for Alláh and gazed at one another with love and respect and gathered among themselves to make zikr-e-Iláhí. These people are not from one place or one neighbourhood, but they are from various tribes, from numerous towns and varying villages."

It is a great shame that this is that age that, instead of muhabbat and accord, there is animosity; instead of looking at others with respect, one looks upon the other with eyes of disdain and contempt. Also, instead of there being zikr-e-Iláhí in peoples' hearts, there is ghaflat-e-Iláhí.

Another virtue is that Alláh Ta'álá will establish the zákir in Jannat-e-Dárul-Jalál (place of Splendour in Paradise). Alláh Ta'álá has emblazoned this with His own Name:

تَبٰرَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلٰلِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

Blest be the name of your Lord, Mighty and Glorious! (S.55.78.)

Subtle points of the Kalimah

There are untold amazing and fascinating subtleties in this Kalimah.

Firstly, that this Kalimah, in its pronunciation, is confined to the oral cavity. It has no affiliation with the lips. This is intimation that it is connected to that pure cavity – that is, the heart.

Secondly, all its letters (in Arabic) have no dots. In this is the intimation that one should have no association with anybody else. In making His zikr one should cut off all thoughts connected with anything else that is not Alláh Ta'álá. The heart should be cleansed from the grasp and affiliation of all else besides Alláh Ta'álá.

Thirdly: A year consists of 12 months. This Kalimah also has 12 letters (in Arabic). This covertly implies that whosoever recites this Kalimah with heartfelt conviction will have one year's sins forgiven.

Fourthly: A full night and day has 24 hours. This Kalimah, if combined with Muhammad Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم contains 24 letters (in Arabic). This intimates in the direction that that person who recites this Kalimah once during the day and night, then each letter will be a kaffárah (atonement) for the sins of each and every hour of the day and night.

Fifthly: The Kalimah has seven words in it. Jahannam also has seven doors. In this is the intimation that each of the seven doors close by the reciter reciting each of the seven words

An incident: the pilgrim & the pebbles

At this point an incident comes to mind:

It is written in the kitáb "Al-Haqá'iq" that a certain person stopped at Arafát and then made his way to Muzdalifah and then to Mina.

[These are places near Makkah. Pilgrims follow this route at the time of hajj.]

Having collected his pebbles, he cast them at the Jamarát. As he cast the pebbles, he addressed them: "O Pebbles! Bear witness! With a sincere heart I am reciting:

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّداً عَبْدُهٗ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ

Saying this he cast the pebbles. That night this person had a dream. In the dream he saw that it was the Day of Qiyámat. The Throne of Justice of Alláh Ta'álá had been set in position. Accounting of deeds was taking place. A'mál were being weighed. His turn also came. His sins outweighed his good

deeds, resulting in the order being given that he be sent to Jahannam. The malá'ikah were dragging him towards Jahannam. When this person reached the doors of Jahannam he saw those very pebbles taking up positions in front of the door. They prevented him from entering. The warder at the door of Jahannam tried to remove them, but he was unsuccessful. After repeated attempts, when the warder and the other malá'ikah failed to remove the pebbles, this person was brought back to under the Arsh. Following closely behind him were the pebbles, hastening to intercede for him. Their intercession was accepted and the order was given for this person to be entered into Jannat.

Narrations of the virtues of the Kalimah Sharíf which have been narrated are now mentioned.

The Kalimah & forgiveness: a few incidents

There was a person, from the Baní Isrá'íl, who was involved in disobeying his Rabb for 480 years. One-day muhabbat-e-Iláhí (passionate, love of Alláh Ta'álá) welled up in his heart and he came to Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام and recited:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ مُوسٰى رَسُوْلُ اللهِ

Just then the angel Hadhrat Jibríl عليه السلام descended and said: "O Músá! Alláh Ta'álá has forgiven his sins of 480 years!"

Is there any wonder then that Alláh Ta'álá will also forgive the sins of a faithful bondsman (ímándár bandah) by him reciting "Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh"?

It is stated in the Hadíth Sharíf that the moment the bandah recites "Lá-iláha-illalláhu," an angel takes it upwards to the heavens and an angel from the heavens descends to receive it. The angel descending from above asks the first one: "From where have you come?" This one responds by asking: "Where are you going to? I am taking the shahádat of such and such person's Kalimah Tauhíd to his Rabb." Hearing this, the other angel says: "I am descending for this reason that I may convey to him the good news of salvation from the punishment of Jahannam."

Hujjatul-Islám, Hadhrat Imám Abú Hamíd Ghazálí narrates that somebody

saw Zubaidah in a dream. He asked her: “How did Alláh Ta’álá treat you?” She replied: “O Son! Alláh Ta’álá forgave me on account of four Kalimas:

“The first Kalimah was:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ اُفْنِيْ بِهَا عُمْرِيْ

There is no deity worthy of worship except Alláh: I am annihilating my whole life for it;’

“The second Kalimah was:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ اُدْخَلُ بِهَا قَبْرِيْ

There is no deity worthy of worship except Alláh: I will enter into the grave with it;’

“The third Kalimah was:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ اَخْلُوْ بِهَا وَحْدِيْ

There is no deity worthy of worship except Alláh: I will pass my solitude (in the grave) with it;’

“And the fourth Kalimah was:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ اَلْقىٰ بِهَا رَبِّيْ

There is no deity worthy of worship except Alláh: I will meet my Rabb with it.”

Hadhrat ’Alí رضی الله تعالی عنه was passing by a particular cemetery. He stood there and called out in a loud voice: “Peace be upon you, O dwellers of the graves! How have you found ‘Lá-iláha-illalláh’ (i.e. What did you reap by virtue of this Kalimah)? A voice replied: “Through this sacred Kalimah we have found salvation from every form of destruction and calamity.”

Hadhrat ’Abdulláh Bin Abbás رضی الله تعالی عنه has narrated: “The meaning of ‘Lá-iláha-illalláh’ is this that there is nobody who can bring benefit or cause harm except Alláh Ta’álá. Besides Him nobody can cause disgrace and nobody can give respect. Besides Him there is no one who can give and there is no one who can withhold.”

There is another narration by Hadhrat ’Abdulláh Bin Abbás رضی الله تعالی عنه that under the Arsh is a caller who calls out: “O Jannat! You and your everlasting blessings – for who are these?” The reply comes forth: “I have been prepared for the reciters of ‘Lá-iláha-illalláh’ and am harám for those

who reject 'Lá-iláha-illalláh' ". Jahannam says: "That person will reside in me who rejects the Kalimah."

Tauhíd-e-khális – pure tauhíd

The reciters of the Kalimah have four states: The illustration is that of a shell, the skin, the kernel and the extract of the kernel. Take an almond: firstly, it has a shell; secondly, there is a thin skin, thirdly is the almond itself and, fourthly, is its oil – the oil being the essence. However, obtaining the oil is dependent on the almond kernel being succulent, which is dependent on the integrity of the skin, which, in turn, is dependent on the integrity of the shell. In other words, each is dependent on the other for its existence and survival. Take a mango: just the skin without the kernel and the juice, is useless. The juice, in turn, cannot remain intact without the protective skin.

Applying this to the Kalimah: Merely to recite "Lá-iláha-illalláh" with the tongue and the heart to be completely heedless, is like having a mere shell, as in the illustration above. This was the situation with regard to the Tauhíd of the munáfiqín (in the age of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم), that it benefited them as long as they remained in the world, in that they were dealt with in the same (generous) manner as the mu'minín and they benefited from them. However, when the munáfiqín leave this world they are cast in the blazing fire of Jahannam.

The Tauhíd of the mu'min is like the kernel of the almond, in that the kernel contains a variety of waste products also. So, the mu'min is also not free of inclining towards worldly display. The essence of the almond is its oil, which is not contaminated with anything else. This is the quality of the pure Tauhíd of the Árif-billáh. It is free of everything besides Alláh Ta'álá; it is safe from riyá and sam'ah (show/ ostentation). His vision can accommodate nothing except Alláh Ta'álá. His eyes see nothing except Alláh Ta'álá. A poet has quite aptly stated:

By reason of my seeing my Friend, I am oblivious of my life;
And, by reason of the remembrance (zikr) of my Friend, I am oblivious of the universe!

The importance of the Kalimah

Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه was in the throes of death. The talqín of "Lá-iláha-illalláh" was made in his presence. He responded by saying: "What, do you think that I have forgotten my Alláh Ta'álá that I should be reminded of Him now?" What he was saying is that He was in his heart all the time.

A qissah: the "insane" princess & her father

There is another qissah of Hadhrat Junaid Baghdádí رحمة الله عليه. He states:

"Once, I left home with the intention of performing hajj. The camel I was riding turned its direction towards Constantinople. I tried very hard to stop it from proceeding in this direction and get it to turn back in the direction of Makkah, all to no avail – it persisted in going in the direction of Constantinople [modern day Istanbul]. When it repeatedly turned in this direction, I left it to proceed on its own.

"We finally reached Constantinople. When we entered the city we found the inhabitants very agitated. Very much perplexed at this state of the people, I enquired as to the reason for this. I was informed that the king's daughter had become insane and the people, rushing about here and there, were in search of a physician. I told the people: 'I will undertake her treatment immediately. Take me to her.'

"When I reached the place where she was kept, the princess called out to me from inside: 'O Junaid! Although you tried to turn your camel away from my direction, but just see how my jazbah forcefully drew you to me!'

"When my gaze fell on her I saw that the princess was laden with a heavy iron yoke around her neck and that her feet were bound in chains. She addressed me again, saying: 'O Junaid! Prescribe some medicine for my ailment!'

"I told her: 'Recite "Lá-iláha-illalláh". The moment she recited the Kalimah the iron yoke on her neck and the chains on her feet split asunder and fell to the ground and she immediately became well.

The princess's father, the king, saw this amazing recovery and remarked: 'You appear to be an excellent physician! Prescribe some medication for me as well.'

"I said: 'You also recite this Kalimah.'

"The king also recited 'Lá-iláha-illalláh' and became a Muslim. With him, many others also became Muslim."

Respected friends! This Kalimah enjoys such a high status that Alláh Ta'álá has prescribed for His bandas all acts of worship and all obedience – in fact, the whole of the Sharí'at – for the purpose of embedding and maintaining it. This Kalimah is the means for attaining Ma'rifat-e-Iláhí (gnosis of Alláh Ta'álá), through worship and obedience. Whether the wird of this Kalimah is done in the inner recesses of the heart, or whether done by a person who is an Árif-billáh, having tasted the delight of the affection and the ma'rifat of the Exalted Creator, he will be blessed with the enrapturing delight of both life and death.

If the enrapture of the one who has a passion for death were to be narrated,
Even (Hadhrat) Ísá and (Hadhrat) Khidr would yearn for death!

Another qissah of an "insane" princess

Hadhrat Khawás رحمة الله عليه relates an episode:

"The thought crossed my heart that I should visit the city of Rome. I consulted with my heart and put forward that it would be better to make one's way to Baitul Muqaddas or Madínah Tayyibah, but my heart would not accept this. Even though I patiently explained the benefits of these options to my heart time and again, my heart would not accept my alternate suggestions. The final outcome was that I made a firm resolve to visit Rome.

"When I reached Rome, I found the inhabitants gathered at one place. It appeared as if they were caught up in some great difficulty, some alarming problem. It turned out that some girl had become insane and the girl in question was the king's daughter. I promised to undertake her treatment. The people enquired: 'Are you a physician?' "I replied: 'I am not a physician, but I am the slave of a Physician.'

"The inhabitants took me to the king, who took me to his daughter. The moment the princess set her eyes on me she said: 'O Khawás! That very Physician whose slave you claim to be, is the very One who has thrown

me into 'insanity!' Listen! The commencement of this 'illness' of mine was as follows: One night I was immersed in my comforts and pleasures when, suddenly, Jazbe-Iláhí created an unusual emotion in my heart, a pulling and drawing force, that drew me to His qurb-e-khás. Zikr-e-Iláhí automatically came to my lips uninterruptedly. I turned my back on the world (dunyá.) I heard an extremely melodious voice, one that was most alluring, telling me:

قُلْ هُوَ اللهُ اَحَدٌ وَّالرَّسُوْلُ اَحْمَدُ

Say, He is Alláh, the One; and Ahmed is (His) Messenger.

"I told the princess: 'Do you not desire for the tranquillity of our Islámic country?'

"She replied: 'Goodness, Khawás! What will I go and do there?'

"I said: 'There are situated the blessed places of Baitul Muqaddas, Makkah Mukarramah and Madínah Munawwarah.'

"She remarked: 'Is that so? Just lift your head and look up.'

"When I lifted my face heavenwards what did I see? The Khánah-Ka'bah, Madínah Tayyibah and Baitul Muqaddas were circling above my head!

"The princess then continued: 'O Khawás! That person who traverses this Path with the heart, the Ka'bah Mu'azzamah itself comes to circumambulate that person.' Thereafter, the princess addressed me in a passionate and ecstatic voice: 'O Khawás! The time to meet my Friend is near!'

"I said: 'Death in a city of kufr? How can that be?'

"She said: 'What harm is there in it? Flesh and bones will be in the city of Rome; the rúh will be by the side of Janáb-e-Iláhí.' Saying this, she let out an ecstatic cry and she departed from this world. At that moment a Voice was heard:

يَآ أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۝ ارْجِعِيٓ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۝

"O Soul that has attained tranquillity! Proceed towards your Rabb, in the manner that you are pleased with Him and He is pleased with you!" (S.89.27-28.)

The focus of nazar-e-Ilâhí (Alláh's gaze)

Ghaflat is an evil thing. Huzúr-e-Akram صلى الله عليه وسلم has stated:

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْباً مِّنْ ذِكْرِاللهِ

Keep your tongue constantly moist with the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá.

All one's work – Díní or dunyáwí – is accomplished with this. Ponder over its meaning and remove from the heart the love of everything besides Alláh Ta'álá. This is the reason for the creation of the bandah.

وَاذْكُرُوااللهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ۚ

Make the zikr of Alláh in abundance that you may attain success. (S.8.45)

فَاذْكُرُوااللهَ قِيٰمًا وَّقُعُوْدًا وَّعَلٰى جُنُوْبِكُمْ ۚ

(They make the zikr of Alláh Ta'álá) while standing, sitting or lying down. (S.4.103.)

Zikr-e-Iláhí has been eulogised. Jamá'-khawátir (concentration) is an order given to us. The method of attaining this state is the repetitive recitation of Kalimah-Tayyibah, performed with heartfelt enthusiasm. That Being is extremely merciful and bounteous, but sincerity is essential. This means that one should be obedient to Alláh Ta'álá solely with the understanding that this is the right and the order of Alláh Ta'álá and one should have no other motive.

If one ponders on the fact that none of the creation will accept anything when the contributor has a corrupt intention and contaminates his intention with impurities, then what can one say about that great Being whose name is "Latíf" (One who is most sublime) and "Quddus" (One who is most sacred)? Even though our obedience may not be absolutely clear and sincere, then too He favours us with His attributes of "Rahím" (One who is most merciful) and "Rahmán" (One who is most benevolent.)

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ ۗ

Neither does the blood nor flesh (of the sacrificial animal) reach Alláh, but your taqwá (i.e. your sincerity) reaches Him. (S.22.37.)

A Hadíth Sharíf states:

اِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ اِلٰى صُوَرِكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ يَّنْظُرُ اِلٰى قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَ اَعْمَالِكُمْ

Alláh Ta'álá does not look at your form –

He looks at your hearts and your a'mál.

Ponder! That aspect which the creation looks at – your appearance – can be cleansed with soap and made pretty with the application of make-up, whereas the heart, which is the focus of Nazar-e-Iláhí is brimming with the filth of association with ghair and the excreta of pride, jealousy and show. It is appropriate to apply the following couplet to this state of affairs:

From the outside, the graves of the kuffár appear beautifully adorned;
But, were one to peep inside, one would see it filled with the
Wrath of Azza-wa-Jal (Alláh Ta'álá).

An incident: the priest turning away from the cross

I am reminded of an incident concerning a Christian priest:

The priest was the head of all the other priests. He stayed in the church. Whenever he had to leave the church, he used to face the crucifix and leave. He never turned his face away from the crucifix. His son once undertook a journey by sea during a season of storms and hurricanes. The priest was most uneasy. All the time he anxiously awaited news of his son's wellbeing.

Suddenly the news reached him that his son had arrived home safe and sound. In his unbounded love, he left the church to go and meet him, but he forgot his normal habit of not turning his face away from the crucifix and, in his haste to meet his son, he turned his back to the crucifix. After meeting his son he remembered his disloyalty to the crucifix.

Immediately he returned and confessed to the other priests of his negligence. They declared that the punishment for this was that he should be lashed a 100 times. The lashing started, halting only when the full 100 lashes were meted out.

The people thought that the priest's attitude to the crucifix would now have changed to one of anger because of the severity of the lashing.

However, instead of the whipping having a negative effect and stopping him from the worship of the crucifix, the priest got hold of a knife and cut off his feet at the ankles and said: "This is the punishment for one who turns his face away from his lord and turns his back to him!"

If this is the attitude of the wayward people of bátil on showing disloyalty to bátil, then what should the state of the people of Haqq be when they are negligent of the remembrance of Alláh Ta'álá and turn their backs away?

Another incident: a pious person refuses a gift

In the same vein is another incident:

A certain person brought some cloth as a gift for a pious person and presented it to him, saying: "This is for you to wear."

The pious person said: "I will not accept it. I shall not wear it." When the other person insisted on giving him the cloth, the pious person made it known to him the intention with which he was giving the gift. He said: "I only wear those clothes that have been presented purely for the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá. This cloth does not fall into that category."

The person had presented the cloth with the intention that Alláh Ta'álá should fulfil his wishes through the barkat of giving the cloth to the pious person. The latter had got wind of his intention.

If this is the situation with the creation, that an item is refused because it was given for ghairulláh – for motives other than the pleasure of Alláh Ta'álá – then what can one say about that Being, Haqq Subhánahu-wa-Ta'álá, knower of the unseen? Even if one Kalimah were to issue from one's lips with complete sincerity, from where to where will that person not journey?

The difference between "Sanam" & "Samad"

There is this story of an old man living in a city in Hindustán. The best part of his life he had spent in worshipping an idol. It so happened that he faced an extremely important task for which he pleaded for assistance from his idol. Hours on end he rubbed his nose in obeisance in front of it; he implored it for help; he cried in front of it; he even presented it with sacrificial offerings. He reminded his idol: "O Sanam! For a long time have

I worshipped you. I have even offered you sacrifices. I have left no stone unturned in my worship of you. Have pity on my condition! Look at my sorry state!" But no sound came from the lifeless piece of rock fashioned into an idol. Repeating: "O Sanam! O Sanam!" he finally became exhausted.

The thought then occurred to him: "Very well. I should rather call on that One, that very One who the Muslims consider to be Absolute." With this thought in mind he reflected on his past life and became remorseful about his lifetime of negligence and foolishness. He now called out: "O the Absolute Khudá. Please accept my supplication!" That is: "O Samad! Come to my assistance!" A Voice was heard:

لَبَّيْكَ يَا عَبْدِيْ اُطْلُبْ مَا تُرِيْدُ

O My bondsman! I am at your service! Ask! What is it that you desire?

The malá'ikah, on witnessing this, spoke up: "O our Alláh! We are amazed that, on the one hand, he called on the idol for ages and received no reply yet, on the other hand, he called on You just once, and You responded by saying: 'Labbaik.'"

Alláh Ta'álá said: "O My malá'ikah, when he called on his 'Sanam' and received no reply, he became despondent and turned away to call on 'Samad' – if he received no reply from Me as well, then what difference would there be between Me and that lifeless idol? Whereas there should be a vast difference between 'Sanam' and 'Samad' ".

Sacrifices for the sake of preserving ímán

There were those who understood the reality of the Kalimah. They took delight in it, became inflamed with it. They gave up everything, even their lives, for it. They had swords cut their bodies – they submitted. Wild animals devoured them – they accepted. They were drowned in the rivers – they submitted. Fish swallowed them – they did not breathe a word about it. They were executed – they remained pleased. They were expelled from their towns; they were forced to leave their wives and children, their houses were confiscated; their properties were snatched away; they were reduced to poverty – in other words, every conceivable act of tyranny

was inflicted on them, but they adopted tafwíz-e-kámil (placing their trust completely in Alláh Ta'álá.) They were hurled into a fire – they showed perfect forbearance (sabr-e-tám). *[These are references to the tortures inflicted on the reciters of the Kalimah and the sacrifices they had to bear – Tr.]*

A qissah of a believer being thrown into a cauldron of oil

Those who brought ímán on Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام and recited "Lá-iláha illalláhu, Músá Rasúlulláh" were punished harshly by Fir'oun. He went to this length that he took a large cauldron, filled it with oil, placed it on a huge fire and hurled one such person who had brought ímán into the boiling oil. Hadhrat Jibríl عليه السلام immediately took him out. Fir'oun hurled him in again. Hadhrat Jibríl عليه السلام lifted him out again. Three times this happened.

Finally, this person, intoxicated with ímán, turned to Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام and said: "Janáb! Please make du'á to Alláh Ta'álá that He should not take me out of the cauldron. For me it is much better that I sacrifice my life for Islám on this Kalimah than undergo this difficulty." Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام made du'á on his behalf. Fir'oun again hurled him into the cauldron. This time this sinless 'áshiq of Alláh Ta'álá was scalded by the oil into a formless piece of charcoal. Hadhrat Jibríl عليه السلام came to Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام and said: "O Músá عليه السلام! Alláh Ta'álá has also increased your reward and blessed him also with an excellent reward! At the time all the doors of Jannat were opened for his rúh to enter!"

O Muslims! When this is the reward for those who recited the Kalimah-e-Músá عليه السلام, then imagine what the reward will be for the reciters of the Kalimah-e-Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. Be a shidáí (lover) as well as a fidáí (devotee). From your appearances let it be apparent whose 'áshiq you are and become a complete example of:

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

Verily, in the Messenger of Alláh you have a good example. (S.33.21.)

The steadfastness of the Asháb-e-Khahf – Companions of the cave

There came a time when the King Diqyánus ruled over the Christians of Rome. This was a period far removed from the time of Hadhrat Ísá عليه السلام. This king was cunning, arrogant and oppressive beyond limits. He turned away from his religion and compelled the populace into idol-worship. He ordered that sacrifices be offered to the idols and said: "Whosoever does not do so will have to pay with his life!" He did not stop at a mere announcement, but went to each and every city, compelling thousands into idol-worship and putting to the sword countless others. He finally reached the city, where the Asháb-e-Khahf resided. The name of this city was Yafsús.

On his arrival, those who wished to save their ímán started fleeing from the city. The king sent his soldiers after them and had them brought to him. Those who refused to submit to him were put to the sword. Others decided to submit to him.

A few youths, who have become famous as the Asháb-e-Khahf, were blessed by Alláh Ta'álá with ímán and with the qualities of sabr, tawakkul and zuhd. They had attained the state of wiláyet. When they were told by the king to turn to idol-worship, they utilised the quality of perseverance which, by the taufíq of Alláh Ta'álá, had been instilled in them. The eldest among them, Hadhrat Maksalmíná, gave the reply: "We are not going to give up the worship of the True Deity, the Master of the heavens and the earth, for the worship of anything else. Do with us what you wish. Do not place your hopes in us becoming a party to kufr and shierk." His companions also supported him fully in this and showed unanimity with their tauhíd.

Hadhrat Ibn Abbás رضى الله تعالى عنه states: "I know their names (that is, of the Asháb-e-Khahf). They were seven persons: Tamlíkhá, Maksalmíná, Martúnash, Tínúnas, Siyármínúnas, Zútawás and Kashfítnúnas. The eighth in this group was a dog whose name was Qitmír."

When the king saw the boldness of the seven he had their clothes removed and said: "I feel pity for your youth and your beauty. I, therefore, grant you a few days' reprieve, so that you can get some sense and think over your decision." Saying this, King Diqyánus set off for another city.

The persecuted youths discussed among themselves on what they should

do and agreed on a plan to leave the city and hide in a cave. Consequently, each went home, collected some money and departed for a nearby mountain, Jabal-e-Yanjulús, where they hid in a large cave. Once there, they fell into sajdah, lamenting in front of Haqq Ta'álá. In order to alleviate their discomfort Alláh Ta'álá spread over them a heavy mantle of sleep and they all fell asleep instantly.

Back in the city: King Diqyánus returned and searched everywhere for the youths, but found no trace of them. He then prepared an epistle detailing everything about the youths – their names, their parentage, their ages, their addresses, their ages, their features and also the date. Having noted down all these details he placed the epistle in his treasury.

The youths slept in the cave for a full 300 years. Their dog, which had accompanied them, also slept all this time on the threshold of the cave. They also slept in a remarkable manner: the sun's rays did not affect them and the rain did not fall on them, yet they had sufficient ventilation. While asleep they were even made to change positions so that the earth would not affect them. Their eyes were somewhat open, somewhat closed and their breathing was even, so that it did not appear as if they were sleeping, in case even if any passer-by were to see them he would think that they were awake and not trouble them. In fact, Alláh Ta'álá had made complete arrangements for their comfort and safety. It is indeed true:

مَنْ كَانَ لِلّٰهِ كَانَ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ

Whoever becomes Alláh's, Alláh Ta'álá becomes his.

Three centuries went by. During this time several kings occupied the throne in Rome and passed on. Simultaneously, vast and amazing changes occurred in the customs and lifestyles of the people. At the end of this period, a pious Christian king, Baidrús, ascended the throne and ruled over the kingdom. He called his people towards ímán. However, an epoch had passed in the populace being steeped in corruption and, consequently, just as many listened to his call and brought ímán, similarly, many would not hearken and rejected the concept of being resurrected on the day of Qiyámat. Finally, the king made a du'á: "Bár-Iláhí! Manifest such a sign

whereby a person will be resurrected a second time after dying, in order that those who consider it impossible can witness the event themselves."

This du'á of his was accepted and the Asháb-e-Khahf were awakened. At the time that they had fallen asleep it had been close to sunset and the time that they woke up was more or less the same time of the day. That is why, when they estimated the duration of their sleep, they said:

قَالُوْا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۚ

"We have tarried a day, or part of a day." (S.18.19.)

Now, on the one hand, they were feeling hungry; on the other hand, they were worried as to – Alláh Ta'álá knows! – what the consequences were of King Diqyánus returning and searching for them. That is why Hadhrat Tamlíkhá, who had custody of all their money, was sent into the city. Safeguarding himself, his task was to enter the city inconspicuously, make enquiries, buy some food that had not been sacrificed in the name of idols and make sure that he did not give away their whereabouts.

Hadhrat Tamlíkhá, taking with him the coins of the Diqyánus dynasty, entered the gates of the city to find that neither was it the same city, nor was the bazár the same, nor were the people the same, nor was the society the same! There was once an age when nobody could even take the name of Hadhrat Sayidiná Hadhrat Ísá عليه السلام. But now he saw the majority of the people performing namáz and appearing outwardly to be pious. In utter amazement he studied the faces of the people, but failed to recognise anybody. Finally, thinking that he had forgotten his way and landed up somewhere else, he asked somebody the name of the city. He was given the name of the very city. His amazement increased to a level of perplexity. He entered a shop to buy some food items and took out his coins. When the locals saw these Diqyánus coins, they, in turn, became amazed and thought that some hidden treasure had been uncovered. The word spread and, in the course of time, reached the king's palace.

King Baidrús summoned the whole group and questioned them in detail. He then went to the royal treasury and recovered the epistle on which was inscribed the details of their disappearance. Everybody then went

to the cave, where the youths re-entered, had discussions and finally greeted everybody before the people departed. They stayed in the cave and passed away therein. There is some difference of opinion among the mufassirín: some say that they are still asleep; others say that they have passed away.

Thereafter, King Baidrús had a masjid erected near the cave as a memorial so that people should know that the youths were worshippers and not objects of worship.

You will have pondered on the fact that these youths remained firm and unshaken in the Path of Alláh Ta'álá. They did not bother about any anticipated future difficulties. They acted courageously in the face of Diqyánús's oppression and tyranny, what the Ahle-Haqq should do. Alláh Ta'álá enshrouded them with His shade of perfect bounty and mercy and saved them from the evil of the tyrant while keeping their ímán intact. Truly:

مَنْ كَانَ لِلّٰهِ كَانَ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ

Whoever becomes Alláh's, Alláh Ta'álá becomes his.

Verily, become Alláh's – then there will be no deficiencies. Take a lesson from the behaviour and firmness of the Asháb-e-Khahf.

The manner of isále-thawáb – reward for the deceased

The fundamental aspect is conformity in our deeds. There is no basis for making provisions in honour of the dog of the Asháb-e-Khahf, calling home a black dog and feeding it! Has this been mentioned anywhere in the Qur'án Sharíf or Hadíth Sharíf? Have any of the Imáms stated that one should place provisions? There is no mention of it anywhere. And what does not appear in the Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf and Fiqh and one does it, thinking it is necessary and one has the intention of attaining reward, is bid'ah and is a great sin.

Yes, if you have the means, then do as you wish, when you wish and for whomsoever you wish, with muhabbat and ikhlás, as follows: Without getting into debt, cook whatever you wish and distribute it for isále-thawáb.

Alternatively, distribute cash, clothes or goods and let the thawáb reach the deceased. Never mind objecting to this, we encourage this that the deceased and the buzurgs be blessed in abundance in this manner. The only point we stipulate is that it should be done within the limits set by the Sharí'at. Those acts that merit thawáb and are acts of obedience, if done under the auspices of the Sharí'at are maqbúl. Not those performed contrary to the qánún.

Just take namáz – what a great act of obedience! – yet, if it is performed with the intention of ostentation, is it of benefit? Or, if performed facing away from the qiblah, or performed at the time of zawál, or at the time the sun is setting, will the namáz be accepted? Of course not. We, therefore, come to know that any act performed in the manner one is ordered to, is worthy of being rewarded and is the basis for thawáb. Otherwise, one is wasting one's time, one's money is lost and one earns sin instead of reward – neither has one gained anything nor has the deceased. Nobody forbids you from blessing the deceased with thawáb. What is forbidden is the use of wrong methods. Understand this very well.

The responsibilities of the reciters of the Kalimah

I have stated that the honoured Kalimah has unlimited benefits. Our solid Dín and the whole of Islám rest on it. The best of zikr is:

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh

If the Tauhíd meaning of the Kalimah were to be entrenched and firmly implanted in our hearts, then all 'ibádat and tá'at will become extremely easy and, on the other hand, the heart will be extremely disgusted by disobedience.

Take our worldly affairs as an illustration: To accept any king as a king, to honour and respect his officially appointed viceroy, to be obedient, to approach him with love and affection, to be fearful of disobeying him and avoid any disobedience; and to accept any laws that emanate from him and act according to them – all this becomes compulsory when the king

is accepted as a king.

It also becomes compulsory to view the laws with due respect; to consider oneself in need of the book of law; to have persons having an in-depth knowledge of the law-book and for them to be present at certain places; for these persons to be fully knowledgeable about the book and for those who are not knowledgeable to ascertain from the scholars matters concerning etiquettes, manners and refinement. It is considered necessary to bring one's affairs in line with the laws. It is also considered necessary to settle disputes according to the laws and to accept such settlements. Should any doubts arise, referral of matters to higher authorities, whose decisions should be accepted with silence and with cheer – all of this has been implemented as being compulsory.

Why is all this? Solely on the basis of accepting the king as a king and as ruler of the kingdom, all these responsibilities have become incumbent. The compulsory as well as its corollaries are now incumbent on one's ján (life) and mál (wealth). The respect and obedience of all the functionaries become obedience of the king. Contempt and defamation of the judicial laws are tantamount to contempt and defamation of the king.

From the above, It is proven that it becomes incumbent for one affirming the Kalimah Tauhíd to be obedient to the Ambiyá and Rasúls عليهم السلام. And the obedience of the Ambiyá and Rasúls amounts to obedience to Alláh Ta'álá.

مَّنْ يُّطِعِ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللهَ ۚ

The one who has obeyed the Rasúl has obeyed Alláh. (S.4.80.)

Thus, the obedience and respect of the representatives (ná'ibáne) of the Rasúl, namely the 'ulemá, are compulsory manifestations of ímán. Contempt, defamation and the ridicule of the 'ulemá are pernicious and manifestations of hypocrisy.

Alláh Ta'álá states:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا أَطِيْعُوا اللهَ وَأَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ۚ

فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِيْ شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوْهُ إِلَى اللهِ وَالرَّسُوْلِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰ خِرِ ۭ
ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَّأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيْلًا ۝

O people of ímán! Be obedient to Alláh and His Rasúl and those from among you who are in authority; and if there is a dispute among yourselves over some matter, seek a solution from Alláh and His Rasúl, (that is, see what the Qur'án Sharíf and Hadíth Sharíf states in regard to it) if you believe in Alláh and the hereafter. This is the best and most excellent method. (S.4.59.)

In order to recognise this ímán, Alláh Ta'álá has stated, addressing His Rasúl صلى الله عليه وسلم:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ حَتّٰى يُحَكِّمُوْكَ فِيْمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ

Qasm of Your Lord! These folk will not be Believers (mu'min) until they do not make you the judge in the disputes between them. (S.4.65.)

Even if Muslims were to be a bit free as far as their amilus-sálihah are concerned, but were to be firm of heart in their i'tiqád and muhabbat of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم and in their muhabbat of the 'ulemá of Dín, as well as being firm of heart in the service of their fellow men and having compassion for the creation and were they then to enter the grave with ímán, then they have found salvation from a great calamity.

The Kalimah and shahádate-a'dá (proof from the enemies of Islám)

This Kalimah Sharíf is that special formula that provides salvation and this is borne out even by Shahádat-e-a'dá.

Qissah: a priest puts a number of questions to a Muslim

I am reminded of an incident:

A certain person left home with the intention of going for jihád. En route, he lost his way. He climbed a huge mountain. On top of the mountain he came across a gathering of a huge army of the Christians. A big chair had been placed in the centre of the gathering.

This person asked somebody the reason for them gathering there. One person replied: "Once a year one of our priests comes and gives us a sermon. The chair is for him."

This pious person narrates: "I quickly changed my clothes, dressing like one of them, and sat there. After a short while the priest came and sat

on the chair. He cast his searching gaze in all four directions and said: 'O people gathered here! I am not going to ask you to listen to any sermon today. The reason is that there is among you an individual of the ummah of Muhammad.' Having said this he again cast his gaze in all four directions and called out in a loud voice: 'I take an oath on my religion! Come forward and stand before all of us so that we may beneficially drink from your radiance and adornment.'

"Hearing these words I could not desist. Reluctantly, I stood up and went to stand in front of the priest. The priest addressed me. 'I have a few questions to put to you. Please provide me with the answers.'

" 'The first question is: I have heard that Jannat has fruit of various colours and differing types. Are there such fruits in this world?'

"I replied: 'Definitely there are such fruits. However, in name and colour they bear a resemblance to the fruit of Jannat, but in pleasurable taste and enjoyment they bear no resemblance.'

"The priest put forward a second question: 'Jannat has no such house or abode that a branch of the Tree of Túbá does not flourish in it. Is there a like example in this world?'

"I replied: 'There is. Just see: when the sun reaches its zenith, as the branches of the Tree of Túbá spreads its branches into all the houses, Similarly, does the sun spread its rays everywhere.'

"The priest asked a third question: 'Jannat has four rivers. The tastes of the contents are dissimilar, yet the source of the rivers – the point of origin of all four – is one. Can one find a similar example in the world?'

"I said: 'Indeed, there is a similar example to be found in this world. Just see: the fluid from the ears is bitter; that of the eyes is salty; that from the nose is smelly; that from the mouth is sweet. These four fluids are dissimilar in their taste and fragrance, yet their source is just one and that is the head.'

"The fourth question that the priest put to me was: 'I wish to know that in Jannat there is such a large platform that has a length of 500 years. That is, if a person travels on it for 500 years, then only will he reach the end of it. When a mu'min wishes to climb on it, it will accommodate him by bowing low before him. When the mu'min rests on it comfortably it will carry him

high up into the air. Is there any illustration of this in this world?'

"I replied: 'Why not? Just see: Alláh Ta'álá states:

أَفَلَا يَنظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ

Do they not see how the camel has been created? (S.88.17.)

" 'This is an eye-witnessed scene that a camel bows its head towards the ground, then takes its passenger and then stands up.'

"The priest then said: 'O generous soul! I have only one other question left to ask. It is this: I have heard that the inhabitants of Jannat will be eating a variety of food and will be drinking various types of drinks, but they will neither have the need to urinate nor to defecate. Tell me: Is there such an example in this world?'

"I replied: 'Yes, there is an example like it in this world! Just see: as long as an infant is in the mother's womb, whatever the infant desires to eat, Alláh Ta'álá places in the mother's heart the desire to eat that item. By the grace of Alláh Ta'álá that item gets digested and then reaches the infant. Yet, as long as the child is in the womb of the mother, neither does it defecate nor does it urinate.'

"The priest remained silent".

One question for the priest

"I told him: 'You asked me five questions. I answered each and every one. You accepted the answers. Now I wish to ask you just one question. Hopefully you too will answer me. The question is: You tell me – what is the key to Jannat?

"The priest turned his attention to his people and said: 'O my people! This person has asked me what the key to Jannat is. So, become alert! Listen with attentive ears! I have read in the previous Heavenly Books that the key to Jannat is: 'Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh'. Saying this the priest became a Muslim and a great number of people also followed and became Muslims."

The consoling friend of a Muslim

This is that Kalimah regarding which Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم has stated:

"Jibríl عليه السلام. has informed me that 'Lá-iláha-illalláh' is the companion and consoling friend of a Muslim, at the time when the frightening scene of death presents itself before him, at that time as well when the overwhelming darkness of the grave overtakes him from all four sides and also at that time when he is resurrected from the grave to proceed grief-stricken to the plains of Hashr (Reckoning)."

The provision for Jannat is this Kalimah "Lá-iláha-illalláh"

This Kalimah-Tayyibah is such that if it is recited with the tongue, even though the heart is inattentive, the person is rewarded with 10 nékís; if the recitation is with an attentive heart – that is, the heart inclines to the hereafter – then the nékís rewarded are 700; and if, at the time of recitation the heart bonds in a special way with Alláh Ta'álá, then the nékís attained are such in number that they will fill the space from east to west!

The haqíqat is this that that person who annihilates his self on a permanent basis – visualises his being as nothing – reaches the high stage of baqá and becomes synonymous with Baqí-billáh. Then, when faná (death) comes, it comes only to his form.

The taubah of a fire-worshipper

I am reminded of an incident

Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام saw a person worshipping fire. Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام went up to him and said: "Tell me, has the time not approached for you to turn to the worship of Alláh Ta'álá?" He replied: "O Músá! Should I now turn to Him, tell me, will He accept my taubah?" Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام said: "Definitely! It is His special, noble quality that He is always ready to accept the taubah of those who turn to Him." The fire-worshipper said: "If that is the case, then you explain Islám to me and I shall become a Muslim now!" Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام did this and he became a Muslim. He was so overcome that he started wailing and crying uncontrollably, to the extent that he fainted and fell lifeless. When Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام went up to him

and placed his hand on him he found him to have really died!

Hadhrat Músá عليه السلام was extremely consternated and turned to Alláh Ta'álá, saying: "What happened?"

Alláh Ta'álá replied: "O Músá! Do you not know that whoever reconciles with Us – whoever turns towards Us in repentance – We become pleased with him? Whoever desires Our nearness, We grant him nearness. O Músá! I have made him of the muqarrabín and have granted him a place in the homes of the muqarrabín."

This is the quality of the Kalimah. If the other Kalimas of the other Ambiyá عليهم السلام were to have this effect, then what can one say about the effect of "Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh"?

The blessing of Islám: the story of two Majúsí (fire-worshippers)

In the time of Hadhrat Málik-Bin-Dínár رحمة الله عليه there were two brothers, both of whom were Majúsí. They had spent their entire life in fire worshipping. One day the younger brother said to his elder brother: "We have spent a long time in worshipping this great fire. Come, let us gauge whether this fire will still burn us or not. Should it burn us, we shall renounce its worship; otherwise, we shall absorb ourselves in its worship permanently." Agreeing on this, both brothers thrust their hands into the fire. What happened? The fire burned them instantaneously!

A Fársí couplet states:

If a fire-worshipper were to foster a fire for a 100 years
And then place his hand in it, it will still burn him.

The two brothers went to Hadhrat Málik-Bin-Dínár رحمة الله عليه with the purpose of accepting Islám. The younger brother accepted Islám; However, the elder brother refused to do so.

The younger brother, having accepted Islám, went into the wilderness and immersed himself in 'ibádat. When he reached home in the evening his wife asked: "Have you brought anything for us to eat?" He replied: "I did the King's work, but my wages I shall get tomorrow." The same thing happened on the following day and this carried on for three days. On the third day, when this 'ábed and devotee of Islám reached the wilderness, he made a du'á: "O my Rabb! Seeing you have entered me into a pure religion

and blessed me with honour, lift from me also the concern of earning for my wife and children."

In the evening, having completed his 'ibádat, he went home to find his wife and children in an extremely exuberant mood and he saw sufficient food in the house. He asked: "Where did all this food come from?" The wife replied: "Today, at the time of Zuhr, a person came with a resplendent container with a thousand dinars in it, gave it to me and then went away. Before leaving he left this message: 'Say to your husband that these are the wages for all his days of labour which he did for the King.' " The wife explained further: "I took one dinar to the money-changer who was a Christian. He scrutinised the dinar very closely and then said: 'This dinar does not appear to be in the category of worldly dinars. It appears to be from the treasures of the hereafter! Tell me the truth – how did you get it?' I explained to him everything in detail. Hearing my story he became a Muslim. He gave me a thousand dirhams and fell prostrate into sajdah and became of the bandagán-e-shákirín (the grateful bondsmen of Alláh Ta'álá)."

All praise and thanks are to Alláh Ta'álá for having blessed us with Islám! And this blessing is more than sufficient. Make shukr that Alláh Ta'álá has blessed you with the wealth of Islám, the Dín of Mohammed صلى الله عليه وسلم. But, alas! Alláh Ta'álá states complainingly:

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ

Very few of My bondsmen are grateful! (S.34.13.)

This wealth of ímán is that regarding which Alláh Ta'álá states:

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ – فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُم بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

And My mercy embraces all things; Therefore, I shall ordain it for those who adopt taqwá and pay zakát and those who believe Our revelations. (S.7.156.)

The special qualities of the Kalimah

Pondering on the above áyet one will see that Alláh Ta'álá has stated firmly

that His Mercy for the mu'minín, muttaqín is that they will enter Jannat in the first instance, but there is no promise of entering Jannat in the first instance for those who have mere ímán without taqwá. Therefore, on what basis can it be correct for those mu'minín who do not perform salát, do not fast, and so forth, to state that Alláh Ta'álá is merciful and that He will forgive all without any punishment and chastisement, despite disobedience and wrong-doing? This is a Shaitání ploy. It is called arrogance and deception.

Somebody asked Hadhrat 'Alí Bin Músá رحمة الله عليه: "Inform us of some Hadíth, with a proper chain and authenticated narrators, that you have heard from your honoured father." On this request he said: "Very well. Listen! My sagely father, Músá, was told by his father, Jáfar, who was told by his father, Báqr, who was told by his father, Zainul-Ábedín, who was told by his father, Husain and Hadhrat Husain said: 'My sagely father, Hadhrat 'Alí Bin Abí Tálib, narrated a Hadíth that Hadhrat Fakhr, Rasúl-e-Khátaman-Ambiyá, Janáb Muhammad Mustafa صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "What is ímán? It is the heartfelt gnosis of Alláh Ta'álá, a verbal affirmation and deeds according to the Laws.' "

This Kalimah Sharíf is that noble and elevated declaration from which all the Ambiyá عليهم السلام derived faiz in the 'Álame-arwáh and malakút (the world of souls and angels); and from which, in the 'Álame-ajsám and násút (the physical and finite world), the honoured sahábah رضى الله تعالى عنهم, the esteemed auliyá and the general populace of mu'minín imbibed and satiated themselves according to their individual capacities.

The first to have derived benefit was Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام. When the rúh, 'aql, 'ilm and ma'rifat-e-Iláhí dawned within him, at that moment he attempted to get up, but his legs quivered and he fell down. He tried again, but again fell down – in the same manner that we see infants attempting to stand up and falling down in the initial stages of them learning to walk. Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام. was in this position, with one leg bent at the knee supporting him and the other leg on the ground, when Alláh Ta'álá blessed him with musháhadah. Involuntarily, from the lips of Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام the words flowed:

الله الله الله لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌرَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

Alláh, Alláh, Alláh: "Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh

This is why it is said that all of Baní Ádam are from Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام in that they all – voluntarily or involuntarily, lovingly and passionately – voice the Kalimah uttered by their father, Hadhrat Ádam عليه السلام

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌرَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh

No nation and no religion are unaware of the superiority of this Kalimah. Certain statements appear in "Waid" (the scriptures of the Hindus), the essence of which being that the scripture "Waid" explains the special quality of "Lá-iláha-illalláhu Muhammadur Rasúlulláh," that reciting "Lá iláha" burns away all one's sins; that reciting "illalláh" produces ma'rifat, enthusiasm and passion in the heart; and if one desires a pure and everlasting life, then recite with it "Muhammadur Rasúlulláh" as well. In other words, without the acknowledgment of the risálat of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم everlasting comfort and pleasure – Jannat – will not be attained.

Pre-requisite of ímán

However, just knowing that an item is superior does not necessarily entail believing it to be superior. That is why a non-Muslim does not become a Muslim merely by knowing the Kalimah to be superior. The reason is that "believing" is termed "ímán", not merely knowing. As for being acquainted, the kuffár of Makkah knew Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم very well – as well as a person knows his own son, where there is no room for any doubt. Alláh Ta'álá states:

يَعْرِفُونَهُۥ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ

They know Rasúlulláh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as well as they know their own sons. (S.2.146.)

Despite this information and knowledge they did not become mu'min. They remained kuffár. The pre-requisite for ímán is that, in one's heart, one should accept the Laws of the Sharí'ah and one should not be troubled

in any way with any wavering. This is stated in the Qur'án Sharíf, where Alláh Ta'álá takes an oath and addresses Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ حَتّٰى يُحَكِّمُوْكَ فِيْمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوْا فِيْٓ أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيمًا ۝

On the oath of your Rabb! These folk will not be Believers (mu'min) until they do not make you the judge in the disputes between them, thereafter they find no dislike in accepting what you have decided and they submit with full submission. (S.4.65.)

In other words: "They will not be Muslim until they do not give precedence to your ruling over their own opinions and are content on it." In addition: "After the ruling of Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم there should be no inhibition in your hearts." Thereafter, as a sign of the absence of vexation in the heart, it is stated: "And act upon it with firmness."

This is ímán! The orders of the Sharí'ah should be accepted wholeheartedly, that there should be no begrudging whatsoever and then to act accordingly. This is kamál-e-ímán (perfect ímán). Check your ímán according to these criteria!

That Being is Samadí (Absolute). He is a Being that may reward one in an unlimited manner. The shortcomings are from our side.

His blessings and mercy are general, O Shahíd!
Why show obstinacy, when you should have shown some worthiness?

A few virtues of the Kalimah

He (Alláh Ta'álá) has such a noble and majestic status that, as it appears in the Hadíth Sharíf, when the bandah utters "Lá-iláha-illalláh", the ceilings of the heavens split asunder and become roads (for it to proceed heavenward). And when this Kalimah is written in his Book of Good Deeds (A'mál-e-námah), its radiance is like that of the full moon, whereas his other deeds scattered around, appear like glittering stars.

It appears in a Hadíth Sharíf that a tree of red rubies is planted in Jannat for that person who recites "Lá-iláha-illalláh". Its trunk, boughs and leaves are composed of pure white mushk. The taste of its fruit is sweeter than

honey; its colour whiter than ice; and its fragrance more aromatic than mushk. A person said: "O Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم! If this is the case, then we shall recite (the Kalimah) in abundance!" Rasúlulláh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Alláh Ta'álá will also grant abundant blessings and eminence. There will be an increase in blessings and eminence from Alláh Ta'álá's side proportionate to the extent that you recite the Kalimah in abundance."

Conclusion and du'á

On this note I now end my talk. You will have now become completely enlightened as to the goodness and reality of the Dín of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم and the religion of Islám and of the Kalimah "Lá-iláha-illalláh". I make du'á that Alláh Ta'álá blesses us all with the taufíq of everlasting ímán and obedience. May Muslims take work with courage and effort. Alláh Ta'álá's promise on granting taufíq is bound to this – working with courage and effort.

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اَنِ الْحَمْدُلِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

تمت